

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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MABEL'S PROGRESS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "AUNT MARGARET'S TROUBLE."

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER VII. "TEMPORARY INSANITY."

BLANK stillness without Bramley Manor. Blank darkness, or at best a gloomy twilight, within. Voices hushed to a whispering utterance, painfully distinct in the silence. Stealthy footsteps creaking hither and thither through the dim rooms. No sound upon the long stone terrace, save the sighing of the wind amid the leafless elm-trees, as if it came laden with sorrow and secrecy, or the ghostly echo of one knew not what voices, lurking in some angle of its antique flagged pavement. In the moist conservatories rich flowers drooped their heavy heads and died untended. Upon the unrolled gravel of the garden walks, here and there a weed began to peer between the pebbles, and to encroach upon the borders. The last withered leaves lay unheeded where they fell, and the damp black earth of the flower-beds smelt like a new-made grave. And but a few hours had sufficed to make this change, and cast this desolation over the prosperous mansion. Walter arriving at night in the large resounding Hammerham railway station, saw Stephens's haggard face under the bright gaslight, and leaping from the carriage whilst the train was yet in motion, ran to him and seized his hand.

"Am I in time? Am I in time?" It was all he could say, and in the giddy confusion of his head, and the noise and movement around him, he seemed unable to comprehend the old clerk's answer. But when they were seated in a cab together, and rolling swiftly towards Bramley Manor, Stephens spoke again. "I've met every train from Holyhead since I sent the telegram, Mr. Walter. Every one."

"I came instantly. It was impossible to be here sooner. I did not lose a moment. Not one moment."

"I know, I know, Mr. Walter. But it seemed to me to be the only thing I could do to hang about the station and wait for you. They had some hope the sight of you might rouse him. And I felt somehow that I shouldn't have been astonished to see your face in the crowd at any minute. Though I

knew, mind you, that nothing short of a miracle could bring you here before this train."

"What is it, Stephens? It came upon me like a thunderbolt. The last accounts I had had from home, all well and cheerful, and then, within ten days—Oh, father, father!"

The lad covered his face, and burst into a fit of weeping that shook him from head to foot.

"Hush, hush!" cried Stephens, clutching him by the arm. "For God's sake, don't give way, Mr. Watty. You don't know—I was to tell you—you must be a man for the sake of your mother and Miss Charlewood. Heaven help the poor souls, they're in sore, sore affliction."

"Is my father's case hopeless? Are they sure? Is there no hope?—none?"

"He was alive when I left the Manor at eight o'clock this morning. But—I—I—Oh, Lord, Mr. Wat, I don't know how to tell you, my poor lad. You must think of the others, you know, and look at Mr. Clement, how he bears up with all *he* has to go through! See now, Walter," added Stephens, as the cab swept in at the open lodge gate, unmindful of forms and ceremonies in the solemnity of the moment, and speaking simply as an old man to a younger one—"see, now, you must make up your mind to bear a heavy trial. There's death in this house we're going to. Walter—your father has—has hastened his own end. He took laudanum last night, and never spoke after they found him insensible."

The vehicle stopped before the portico that Walter Charlewood had last quitted on his sister's wedding-day; joyous, prosperous, rich in this world's goods, and the spoiled idol of indulgent parents. There, in the dimly lighted hall, stood Clement. Was it Clement, this white-faced, haggard man, with sunken eyes, and deeply cut lines of suffering round his mouth? He stood quite still, and looked at Walter impassably. The latter almost staggered as he alighted from the cab, and was fain to lean on the old man's shoulder who accompanied him.

"It is all over," said Clement.

"Oh, Clem, oh, Clem!" The weak trembling lad fell on his brother's breast, who opened his arms to receive him, as he might have done when Walter was a petted wayward child, and would come in their school-days to his elder brother for comfort or protection. The action loosed the pent-up fountain of his own tears, and for a while the two young men sobbed in

each other's arms, and those who stood by kept a reverent silence in the presence of that sacred sorrow. But Penelope had heard the cab stop, and came stealing down-stairs; and at her footstep Clement roused himself, and whispered Walter to be brave and strong, for the sake of the mother and sister, left now to their sole protection and care. The three young people spoke together in whispers for a few minutes after the first sad greetings. Their mother had fallen into a heavy slumber; but the moment she woke, Walter must go to her. As they turned to leave the hall, Clement put his hand on the clerk's shoulder.

"Stephens," he said, "I beg you to go and have some food and a glass of wine. It is prepared for you, and you need it greatly. Since early morning you have eaten nothing."

Stephens looked after his young master as he walked away.

"He forgets nobody; nobody—but himself," said the old man. "Well, I hope the others'll remember him. There are people in this world who are apt to think little of them that don't think much of themselves. More's the pity."

The wretched story that met Walter's ears was soon told. On the night of Clement's visit to Hazlehurst, he had found the household in alarm and horror on his return home. His father had been found in an arm-chair in his own room insensible, and with a phial containing laudanum lying near him. He was still breathing, but spite of all efforts to rouse him, and the prompt attention of Dr. Brett and another physician, who were sent for instantly, he never rallied or became conscious more. He had drank much more wine that evening than usual, as was proved by the nearly emptied decanter left on the dining-table. Had he taken the poison by mistake, and being already in a state of semi-stupor from the effects of the wine? Or was the act done knowingly, and with a full consciousness of the certain death that must ensue? No one could say positively. Clement explained to their old friend and medical attendant, Dr. Brett, that his father's mind had been for some days strained and racked by anxiety, and that the news of their business prospects received that day had been increasingly gloomy and discouraging. The doctors looked at each other and nodded gravely. Their skill, powerless to restore that motionless figure on the bed, with the handsome massive features, expressive in their stillness of profound eternal rest, was needed for the poor bereaved wife, who fell from one fit of shrieking hysterics into another, until nature was exhausted, and she sank into a heavy sleep, that lasted until late into the evening of Walter's arrival.

In the wretched days that ensued, and as the terrible truth dawned on the family—to Clement it had become already apparent—that in addition to the grief of Mr. Charlewood's death, and the added horror and misery caused by the manner of it, they would have to face commercial ruin and disgrace, it was curious to behold the different ways in which these different

human beings, all united by ties of affection, and all dwelling together in the closest familiarity, bore their lot.

After the first transport of genuine sorrow for his father's death, and as the prospect of the future began to unfold before him, the intense egotism of Walter's character—an egotism fostered by years of flattery and blind indulgence—displayed itself painfully. He would sit for hours over the fire in his mother's boudoir, sometimes silent and sullen, sometimes loudly bewailing his fate, always weakly craving for expressions of peculiar sympathy for his misfortunes. His mother, although she sometimes had an uneasy sense of his failure to appreciate Clement's noble self-forgetfulness, still could rouse herself from her own deep despondent affliction to soothe her petted boy's feelings by all the means in her power. She would listen with the utmost patience and sympathy to his account of the "swells" who delighted in his society, and the light of whose countenance would now be lost to him. By whose fault? By whose?

Little mention was made among them of Augusta. A letter had been despatched to her, saying that Mr. Charlewood was very ill, and that no hope was entertained of his recovery, and close after that another announcing his death. The newly married couple would be in Rome by the time the letters reached them.

"Poor child," said Mrs. Charlewood, with a sob, "it's an awful blow to come upon her in her 'oneymoon. Breaking it all up, and bringing her back to a 'ouse of mourning like this."

Penelope Charlewood was not gentle by nature or habit, but she did strive to subdue the abruptness of her manner towards her bereaved mother, as she answered, "Mamma, would it grieve you very much if Augusta did not hurry back to England at once?"

"Well, love, I don't know that she could do any good 'ere. You know poor Gussy was never much 'and at 'elping in trouble."

And then Penelope perceived that her mother knew Mrs. Malachi Dawson sufficiently well not to reckon largely upon any comfort or sympathy to be derived from that sensitive young lady.

Meanwhile, it became evident to Clement that the disaster which had overtaken their house was of a nature that forbade any hope of retrieval. All must go. If even by abandoning everything the firm could come out of the ruin free and clear from debt, he would not complain. But that consolation was not to be his. The more he examined into the state of the firm's affairs, the more hopeless it appeared to be to save anything from the wreck, and he found that his father had launched into many dangerous speculations unknown to him.

I have said that Mr. Charlewood was fond of power and jealous of it, and this feeling had shown itself lately in a growing tendency to keep Clement in a subordinate position in all their business relations, and even occasionally to act in direct opposition to his son's expressed opinion.

Clement broke the truth to his mother as gently as he could. He and Penelope had

already talked openly together of their circumstances. When Mrs. Charlewood learned that she would have to leave Bramley Manor, to resign the luxuries to which she had of late years been accustomed, and perhaps to sink into a poverty greater than she had ever known in her life, she bore the tidings with so little apparent depression as to astonish her children.

"Law! my dears," she said, "don't it all seem like dust in the balance, the money and the finery, when real affliction comes upon us? If he had been spared to us, I dare say I might have fretted over all this loss, and the come-down in the world, but now it don't seem as if anything like that was worth thinking about."

But for her children she grieved heartily. Walter was obliged to confess to his brother that he owed already considerable sums of money in Dublin.

"I'm very sorry for it, Wat. Your allowance was a very ample one. However, I'm not going to reproach you. Of course we must see about the sale of your commission at once, and also get rid of your horses, and whatever valuables there may be belonging to you. I should think that would realise more than enough to cover what you owe."

"And what am I to do then?"

"Do, Watty?"

"Of course the debts of honour must be paid. I had a run of bad luck at loo, and that cleaned me out awfully. But as to the others—well, the tradesmen took the risk; and if other folks lose thousands, they might make up their minds to lose twenties. Especially as they're a rascally lot, and charged me two hundred per cent more than the things were worth, just for the month or two's credit."

"Walter," said his brother, sternly, "let me hear no more of that cant. I don't do you the injustice to suppose that it comes from your heart. I understand perfectly from whom you thoughtlessly imitate it. And I know, too, how you estimate those from whom you have caught it. The friends of Walter Charlewood rich who would give the cold shoulder to Walter Charlewood poor, I think you and I are both able to put down at their proper value. But our just debts must be paid as far as we are able, even though we have to sell the coat off our backs."

Walter was subdued by his brother's determined manner, and said no more. But he complained so bitterly to his mother of Clement's settling everything as he chose, and giving him no voice in the matter, that Mrs. Charlewood ventured to speak timidly to her eldest son, and to sound him as to the possibility of the sale of Walter's commission being avoided. But Clement showed her at once, and conclusively, the complete fallacy of any such idea.

"Dear mother," he said, "if Wat could not manage to keep out of debt with the liberal allowance my father made him, do you suppose it is possible that he can live on his pay? No, no: it is out of the question, believe me. I will do all I can to make things fall as lightly on him as possible; but he must make up his mind to earn his bread now. There is no help for it."

There *was* no help for it. But Walter, beginning to make the astonishing and painful discovery—doubly painful when made so late—that the course of events shaped themselves without the smallest reference to his comfort and convenience, indulged in peevish grumblings against his brother, finding that more satisfactory and less absurd than to accuse the universe in general.

Once Penelope being present at one of these ebullitions, broke out into one of her old sharp stinging moods, and told Walter so many truths, conveyed with such searching, keen-edged words, that Mrs. Charlewood interposed to shield Walter from the storm he had provoked.

"There, there, Penny," said the poor, foolish, kindly woman, "don't be 'ard on your brother, love. If we can say nothing but 'arsh things to each other *now*, it is a sad, sad case."

"What things does he say of Clement?" retorted Penelope, casting a glance of withering scorn at Walter, who sat by the fire half whimpering, half defiant. "*He* to whine and complain of the special hardship of his case! Look at Clem. He has lost more than Walter ever dreamed of. The firm of Gandry and Charlewood was his idol. I don't say it is good to have idols at all; but at least his demanded some nobler offerings than can be supplied by tailors and billiard-markers. Clement's heart is cut—I know it, I see it—by the downfall of the great name and honourable supremacy of the house. He worked to maintain it. He will give his last crust to clear it of a stain before the eyes of all men. He has borne, in other ways, more than any of you know, without complaining. His first thought all along has been for others; but because he does not tear his hair and cry aloud like a spoiled baby, do you think he feels nothing? Walter Charlewood, I am full of faults, I know: I am neither meek, nor sweet, nor humble; but, as Heaven is my witness, I would rather cut off my right hand at this moment than give one needless pang to our brother's brave, constant, generous spirit, by my poor, pitiful, selfish cowardice. If I were a man, I would help those I love. Being a woman, I can but suffer for them; but I will do it silently, and with some decent rag of self-control."

CHAPTER VIII. A COUPLE OF LETTERS.

THE portion of my story that must next be told will be, perhaps, best presented in the following letters, the last of which was received about a fortnight subsequent to the arrival of the first at its destination.

LETTER I.

From Mrs. Malachi Dawson, in Rome, to Miss Charlewood, at Bramley Manor.

"Rome, Piazza di Spagna,
25th of November, 18—.

"In my first hurried letter, sent in reply to the awful tidings then just received, I feel, my dear Penelope, that I did not express myself sufficiently at length, nor in any way make clear to you my state of mind. How, indeed, was it possible to do so? So terrible and overwhelming a shock, to one whom you know to

be such a sadly nervous, sensitive creature as I am, naturally incapacitated me from writing with any self-command. But Malachi thinks that my nerves are now sufficiently strung up (by means of powerful tonics and generous living) to attempt the task. In the present state of sorrow and distress that you are all in, of course it was to be expected that you should be a little inclined to put *me* in the background, and to exhibit a very excusable selfishness in the proposition, which you make as coming from mamma, that we should return to England immediately. For myself (although I know I could be of no use to you, and, perhaps, on the contrary, shall cast on you the burthen of an invalid, for I do *not* think my health would stand a return to Bramley Manor under the present circumstances),—for myself, I say, I would hasten homeward without an hour's delay. But Malachi is, I assure you, very delicate. His little troublesome cough that you always persisted in saying was a nervous trick, but which I, alas! fear is indicative of constitutional weakness of the chest, *requires* a southern winter. You know, Penelope, my *first* duty is now to my husband. And how do you think we should bear to take possession of our new house close to Eastfield, just at this moment, when all the country is ringing with this terrible calamity that has befallen us? And Eastfield is so close to Hammerham, that we should be in the very focus of it all. Even here we are not safe. I took up the Galignani yesterday for half an hour, thinking to distract my thoughts a little, for they all tell me that the complete dulness consequent on our present necessary seclusion is highly injurious to me, when my eye lighted on a circumstantial account of the great failure of Gandry and Charlewood, with other details still more dreadful. I threw the horrid paper from me as if it had been a scorpion, and I had a fit of hysterics that lasted three-quarters of an hour. But, as I said, I don't blame *you* for not thinking of all these things.

"Malachi is the soul of generosity. Some men, in the natural disappointment of finding the woman they had married but half as rich as they had hoped, would visit some of their chagrin upon her. He, on the contrary, spares no endeavour to soothe my feelings. He sends his tenderest condolences to you all, and trusts that you are endeavouring to profit by these severe chastenings, and to turn your eyes from earthly matters to the only true source of comfort and consolation. If there is a sale of the furniture (*how* things can have reached such a pass is, I confess, a mystery to me; but, of course, Clement has managed for the best), I should like to have that little inlaid cabinet that stood in my dressing-room, and the Gobelin fire-screen. Malachi would wish them to be bought in, and will pay Clement whatever price may be agreed upon. We expect to be in England in the spring, and then Malachi joins me in hoping that mamma will come and stay with us for a time. Or you; or, indeed, both of you if we find it possible to accommodate you together. Ah, my dear Penelope, if you could see the

shocking idolatrous mummeries that go on here, you would shrink from your high-churchism in alarm to see whither it leads. I do wish that you would cultivate a more evangelical tone of mind. Let me know what is decided upon for Clement and Walter. Poor Watty, it will come terribly hard upon him; he was getting into such excellent society. And Clement never had any taste for that sort of thing, had he? Now, my dear Penny, I have tired myself and must cease; although I could go on expatiating on our great affliction much longer, if physical weakness permitted the effort. I send my fondest love to all. I hope you take every care of mamma: would that I could be with her! But, alas! the duty of a married woman to her husband is paramount. May Providence guide you all, and comfort you!

"I am ever,

"Your affectionate sister,
"AUGUSTA DAWSON."

Penelope Charlewood read this epistle from beginning to end, in silence; gave it to her mother, who also read it in silence; and then, taking it back, Penelope twisted it neatly and firmly into a tight roll, to which she set fire and held it until the flame scorched her fingers. Then she threw the ashes down and set her heel on them with a rigid, unmoved face.

LETTER II.

From Miss Fluke, Hammerham, to
Mrs. Dawson, Dublin.

"Hammerham, Dec. 14th, 18—.

"My dear Mrs. Dawson. In reply to your letter of the 9th instant, I sit down to give you all the information in my power. Believe me, my dear friend, that I sincerely sympathise with you and with your son, the Reverend Malachi, in this trial. I am sure that we should cordially agree in doctrine, and I regretted much that I had not an opportunity of becoming more closely knit with you in the bonds of Christian fellowship. Papa was well pleased with the Reverend Malachi's views, and found him extremely sound. Would that I could say the same of *all* our afflicted friends! But, alas! my friend, error is rampant among us (see Ephesians, vi. 12). However, I proceed to relate to you what I have been able to glean by diligent inquiry, in accordance with your request. You ask if the failure of G. and C. is so total and hopeless as the world reports? Yes; I am led to believe that but a very small matter can be snatched from the jaws—if I may so express myself—of the creditors. This may well surprise you, as it does me. But I fear, I greatly fear, that much wild speculation and extravagance was going on for some time. To whom to impute the blame, if blame there be, I know not. There is much and sore trouble in Hammerham consequent upon B. and B. having stopped payment, which, indeed, they say was the immediate cause of the catastrophe of G. and C. Papa has himself been a loser to the extent of fifty-seven pounds ten shillings and sixpence in consequence of the panic, which caused a run upon a local savings-bank, of

which he was one of the chief promoters. But he is strengthened to endure (see Psalm lvi. 12). And, besides, we have reason to believe that he will ultimately get the money back again. There was a sale of furniture, plate, carriages, horses, pictures, &c. &c. &c., begun at Bramley Manor on Tuesday last. Many influential families here—members of papa's congregation—have expressed strong objections to the publicity with which the whole affair was managed. There was no attempt, they say, to make the best of things before the eyes of the world. A sale by private contract would, I have reason to believe, have been soothing to the feelings of many of our wealthiest merchants. G. and C. have so long stood at the head of our Hammerham mercantile world, that the blazing forth in broad day of all these painful details—as if G. and C. had been little huckstering tradesmen, who, of course, naturally *must* (according to the inscrutable decrees of an overruling Providence) be sold up now and then—has caused a good deal of annoyance. I went as soon as I heard the first whisper of misfortune, to offer my services, as a friend and as the daughter of a minister of the Gospel. Mrs. C. declined to see me. *Why*, I am entirely at a loss to imagine! The excuse she alleged was, that in the first days of her terrible bereavement, she did not feel *strong* enough to see me. But that, of course, is obviously absurd. P. C. I did see. Also C. C. and W. The latter is much softened by misfortune. May it be blessed to him! I left him a suitable tract. P. is as hard as ever. At least she seems so, but it is not for us to judge (Matthew vii. 1). But what can one expect of a person who abandons her own parish church, where the Word is preached in all its purity, to seek after strange idols with coloured glass and candles (I have been told they are *lighted* on saints' days. But this I do *not* believe), and sermons that only last fifteen minutes? I attended the sale at B. M. the first day, from motives of duty, and inspected *everything*. I suffered a good deal the next day from swelled feet, not having sat down for more than four hours. I grieved—I deeply grieved—over the evidences of profusion and worldly vanity, apparent in the most trifling matters. Of course, my dear Mrs. Dawson, I do not object—nor does papa—to the due and fitting expenditure of wealth on articles which add to the comfort of life according to our station. But what do you think of having patent spring mattresses on all the *servants'* beds? Every one of them. And the sheets linen. Coarse, I am willing to admit (Heaven forbid that I should bear hardly on my fellow-creatures), but all linen, every thread. I made a calculation when I came home of the sum that could have been gained by the difference between the price of these linen sheets and good unbleached cotton ones; and I found that five annual subscriptions to the Christian Reminder, and a life governorship in Duckrell schools, might have been got with the money! And then think of the souls of the poor servants! What can they make of

their catechism, when they are accustomed to such extravagance? C. C. has, I hear, accepted a situation as clerk, or something of the kind—managing man, some say, but he has *managed* his own affairs so shockingly that I should think that was not likely—to a builder's business in London. He might have got something to do here; but the family shrank from remaining in Hammerham. And no wonder! They leave tomorrow. I endeavoured to worm out their address from P., but in vain. Ah, my friend, the nether millstone is soft compared with the hardness of the unregenerate heart! I hope you have good news of my Christian friend, Augusta. Jane was much attached to her. It would be very agreeable for all parties if, when the Reverend Malachi and his wife return to England, Jane could stay with them for a time. She is ordered a little change of air in the spring. We are all going away (D. V.) from Hammerham for a short excursion; but we are seven, exclusive of papa, and it would be convenient for us to get even *one* member of our party disposed of elsewhere. Augusta would find it a great boon to have my sister Jane with her; especially if the Reverend Malachi's parish is a large and populous one. I believe I have answered all your questions. It will give me great pleasure to hear from you at any time; and to be the recipient of any charitable donation you may choose to make to the good cause. The Infant Bosjisman Baptism Mission is at the present moment in want of funds. Papa desires his kind regards to you; and

"I am,

"My dear Mrs. Dawson,

"Yours in all Christian sincerity,

"H. FLUKE."

AN EPISODE OF FOX.

IN the year 1802, Fox* paid a visit to Paris. He was in the zenith of his fame. The object of his visit was to ransack the archives of the French Foreign Office, with a view to the completion of his history of James the Second. He was well received by Bonaparte (then only first

* The Right Hon. Charles James Fox was the youngest son of the Right Hon. Henry Fox, afterwards first Lord Holland, and Lady Georgiana Lennox. He was born in 1749, was educated at Eton and Hertford College, Oxon; he was member of parliament for Midhurst (1768), as a supporter of the Duke of Grafton's administration. He was Lord of the Admiralty under Lord North (1770-1772); Lord of the Treasury (1773-1774), in opposition to Lord North during the American war. He was returned for Westminster in 1780. In 1782 he was appointed Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, under Lord Rockingham, and resigned on his death. Under the coalition ministry of 1783 he resumed office as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. He resigned on the defeat of the India bill in 1783; he headed the opposition to Pitt's ministry, and withdrew from parliament in 1797. In 1802 (the year of his visit to Paris) he was returned for Westminster. On Pitt's death, in 1806, he again took office as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

consul), and the reminiscences which we have before us of this trip are highly interesting, inasmuch as they give us an insight into the private character of one of our greatest orators and statesmen.

Accompanied by Mrs. Fox, by Mr. Trotter, his former secretary, and by Mr. (afterwards Lord) St. John, Fox first visited Flanders and Belgium. In those days express trains were unknown, and "coaching" was the order of the day. Along the monotonous roads the time was beguiled by reading Fielding. At the Hague a picture of the massacre of De Witt by the populace excited in Mr. Fox emotions of the deepest disgust. We find an expression of his feelings in his history of James the Second. It is the key to a page of history. He says:

"The catastrophe of De Witt, the wisest, best, and most truly patriotic minister that ever appeared on the public stage, as it was an act of crying ingratitude, so it is the most completely discouraging example that history offers to the lovers of liberty. If Aristides was banished, he was also recalled; if Dion was repaid for his services to the Syracusans by ingratitude, that ingratitude was more than once repented of; if Sydney and Russell died upon the scaffold, they had not the cruel mortification of falling by the hands of the people: ample justice was done to their memory, and the very sound of their names is still animating to every Englishman attached to their glorious cause. But with De Witt fell also his cause and his party; and though a name so respected by all who revere virtue and wisdom, when employed in their noblest sphere, the political service of the public, must undoubtedly be doubly dear to his countrymen, yet I do not know that even to this day any public honours have been paid by them to his memory."

The religious views entertained by Mr. Fox denote the high tone of a sound mind.

"On the score of religion" (says the author of the Reminiscences) "I perceived that he did not merely tolerate—for that word would be misapplied to his disposition on sacred matters—rather he conceived that all human beings enjoyed the exercise of religious worship, and inoffensive citizens *did not require the permission of others* for this mental enjoyment, but that all were entitled to honour the Deity without reproach or reflection. There never escaped from his lips one disrespectful word regarding religion; never one doubtful smile was seen on his countenance in any place of worship, nor the slightest derogation from a solemn and respectful regard for all around him, either in the Catholic Netherlands or in Presbyterian Holland."

At Brussels, Mr. Fox received letters from his friends urging him to hasten his journey. Lord Holland and his family were anxiously expecting him. He takes up his quarters in Paris at the Hôtel de Richelieu. Racine is his favourite dramatic author; he visits the theatre to see Phèdre, Mademoiselle Duchenois taking

the part. "On this occasion he was recognised by the audience in the pit; every eye was fixed on him, and every tongue cried 'Fox! Fox!' The whole audience stood up, and the applause was universal. He was embarrassed, and so unwilling to receive the applause, as meant for him, that he could not be prevailed upon to stand forward; nor, when his name repeatedly announced left no doubt of the matter, could he bring himself to make any obeisance or gesture of thanks. Perhaps through the unaffected modesty of his nature, he seemed wanting on this occasion in courtesy to the audience. The first consul was in his box. The light was thrown from the stage upon his face, so as to give it an unfavourable and ghastly effect. He was received with some applause, but much inferior to that bestowed upon Mr. Fox."

After devoting a few days to the sights of Paris, the real object of the journey is attended to.

On the fourth day after his arrival in Paris he began his labours. Lord St. John, Mr. Adair, and Mr. Trotter accompanied and regularly attended Mr. Fox at the French archives from eleven to three. He read and translated himself, with alacrity and good humour, and exacted no trouble from others in which he did not take full share. Amongst the many visitors who called at the Hôtel de Richelieu was Kosciusko. He is described as a man of small stature, with nothing prepossessing in his appearance. "He did not speak much, and his manner was extremely simple. Mr. Fox's reception of him was warm and friendly; they seemed happy at meeting; the advocate of America and of the blacks could not but cherish the champion of the oppressed Poles. Kosciusko was apparently in good health, though his wounds never allowed him to be perfectly well."

Fox had been twelve days at Paris, and had not seen Bonaparte except imperfectly at the theatre, so he resolved to go to the next levee. Mr. Merry was then the English ambassador, and the applications for presentation were so numerous that he was compelled to shelter himself under the rule that a letter from Lord Hawkesbury must be handed to him introducing each person. Before the levee our friends pay a visit to Talleyrand.

Talleyrand, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, lived at Neuilly. We arrived (we quote our author) between eight and nine P.M., as it was usual to open the house every evening at that time for all the corps diplomatique and strangers of distinction. Mr. Fox was received with marked attention. M. Talleyrand possesses by no means an agreeable exterior. The circle in the evening was at first entertaining; the variety of characters was great; the Italian princess, the German duchess or prince, members of the ancient French nobility, strangers of rank and talent, literary characters, senators, and the poet and the philosopher mingling in the crowd. Here Mr. Fox met various remarkable men, and conversed with every one with

vivacity. The establishment of the Minister of Foreign Affairs was on the most liberal scale. He was allowed ten thousand a year to enable him to keep a handsome table and receive his guests in a manner worthy of the splendour of the rising government.

On the day of the levee there was a grand parade. Bonaparte, mounted on a white charger, accompanied by some general officers, reviewed his troops, amounting to about six thousand men, with great rapidity. Mr. Fox paid little or no attention to it, conversing chiefly, while it lasted, with Count Markhoff, the Russian ambassador. The account of the levee at which Mr. Fox was introduced to Bonaparte is interesting from the words addressed to him by the first consul; they are the prototype of many similar speeches uttered sixty years later by Napoleon the Third. We give the narrator's own words:

"On the occasion of the great levee which was to collect so many representatives of nations and noble strangers from every country to pay their respects to the first consul, several apartments, having the general name of 'Salle des Ambassadeurs,' were appropriated for the crowd of visitors at the levee previous to their being admitted to the first consul's presence. Lord Holland, Lord Robert Spencer, Lord St. John, Mr. Adair, and myself accompanied Mr. Fox there. The grand masquerade of human life was inexpressibly striking. A restrained expression was often to be caught on the countenances present, which seemed to say, 'Can this be reality? Can it last?' 'What think you of all this?' said the Chevalier d'Azara, ambassador from Spain, addressing himself to Mr. Fox, who made answer by a smile. 'It is an astonishing time,' he continued; 'pictures, statues—I hear the Venus de Medici is on the way; what shall we see next?' A pleasant dialogue ensued between these two statesmen, diverting themselves, when scolding could avail nothing. The American minister, Mr. Livingston, was plain and simple in his manner and dress; Count Markhoff was covered with diamonds, and of a most forbidding aspect, with sound sense, however, malgré that face which no lady would fall in love with, and an ungraceful air; the King of Prussia's ambassador, the Marquis Lucchesini, gaudily dressed—like a foreign bird—but pleasing and easy of demeanour; the Neapolitan ambassador, the Marquis de Gallo, an unmeaning nobleman of the old school; and the venerable and sage negotiator, the Count Cobenzel, the Austrian ambassador, were there, with a great number of English noblemen and gentlemen who, with many Russian and Swedish officers, with the white scarf on their arm, crowded the rooms. There was a much greater number of English presented than of any other nation. The Cardinal Caprara represented his holiness the Pope, with his scarlet stockings and cap, a polite and dignified ecclesiastic. This grand assemblage was detained in the Salle des Ambassadeurs a considerable time, during which several ser-

vants in splendid lace liveries handed round coffee, chocolate, and the richest wines and cakes upon china bearing the initial B., without any armorial, royal, or established mark of rank. The heat was excessive, and expectation, wearied with the pause, began to droop, when the door opened, and the prefect du palais announced to the Cardinal Caprara that the first consul was ready; he afterwards called M. d'Azara, upon which every one followed without regular order or distinction of rank. We ascended the great staircase between files of musketeers!

"When we reached the inner apartment where Bonaparte, surrounded by his generals, ministers, senators, and officers, stood between the two other consuls, Le Brun and Cambacères, in the centre of a semicircle at the head of the room, the numerous assemblage from the Salle des Ambassadeurs formed into another semicircle, and joined themselves to that at the head of which stood the first consul. Bonaparte, of a small and by no means commanding figure, dressed plainly, though richly, in the embroidered consular coat, looked like a private gentleman indifferent to dress and devoid of all haughtiness in his air. The two other consuls, large, heavy men, seemed pillars too cumbrous to support themselves, and during the levee were sadly at a loss what to do—whether the snuff-box or the pocket-handkerchief was to be appealed to, or the left leg exchanged for the right. The moment the circle was formed Bonaparte began with the Spanish ambassador, then went to the American, with whom he spoke some time, and so on, performing his part with ease and very agreeably, until he came to the English ambassador, who, after the presentation of some English noblemen, announced Mr. Fox. Bonaparte seemed a good deal flurried, and said very rapidly, 'Ah! Mr. Fox, I have heard with pleasure of your arrival; I have desired much to see you; I have admired in you the orator and friend of his country, who in constantly raising his voice for peace consulted that country's best interests, those of Europe and of the human race. The two great nations require peace; they have nothing to fear; they ought to understand and value one another. In you, Mr. Fox, I see with much satisfaction that great statesman who recommended peace because there was no just object for war, who saw Europe desolated to no purpose, and who struggled for its relief.'

"Mr. Fox said little, or rather nothing. He had always the same invincible repugnance to acknowledge an address complimentary to himself. A few questions and replies relative to Mr. Fox's tour ended the interview."

Bonaparte is thus described:

"His (Bonaparte's) stature being small, and his person, though not ill, yet not very well formed, he cannot be supposed to have a very striking air on that account; but his countenance has a powerful expression, and decision and determination, when he is grave and thoughtful, are most emphatically marked on it.

His eyes are common grey, and have nothing remarkable in them. I am disposed to think that the lower part of the face, which is the most striking in that of Bonaparte, is the most apt to express a prompt and inexorable disposition. In performing the honours of the levee, this was not at all observable; on the contrary, his smile was extremely engaging, his general expression very pleasing, and his manners divested of all haughtiness without manifesting the least trace of that studied condescension, which, in persons of great rank, is often more offensive than arrogance or rudeness."

When the levee was over, a very pleasant party of English, invited by Lord Robert Spencer, dined at Robert's, the first restaurateur at Paris. Amongst others, Kemble was there. On the following day, Mr. and Mrs. Fox and some of their friends paid a visit to the celebrated Abbé Sièyes. He was living in retirement about twelve miles from Paris, cultivating estates (national domain) to a considerable extent, granted him by the new consular government as a remuneration for past services, an asylum for the future, and a proper retreat from all subsequent cares of government.

After the levee, Mr. Fox resumes his researches among the historical records with indefatigable zeal. He is surprised at finding how devoted to his religious opinions was Louis the Fourteenth; it is evident in all his letters to Barillon. Thus while he was bribing a monarch to trample down and debase his own subjects, he was also urging the restoration of the Catholic religion, whose precepts forbade the overthrow or any interference with established governments.

An account of a dinner at Talleyrand's we will give in the narrator's own words:

"Some time after the levee, we dined at M. Talleyrand's, at Neuilly. We went between six and seven, but did not dine till eight. The dinner-hour at Paris had become ridiculously late, and, as in London in fashionable life, resembled more the Roman supper than what accords with the modern term dinner. M. Talleyrand was at Malmaison transacting business with the first consul, and the dinner waited for him. He and madame sat at the sides of the table; the company, amounting to between thirty and forty (and this, I believe, did not exceed the ordinary daily number), were attended by almost as many servants without any livery. Behind Madame Talleyrand's chair two young blacks, splendidly habited in laced clothes, were placed. The master of the feast devoted himself to a few distinguished persons around him. On them he bestowed his most choice wines, and to them he directed all his conversation. Several émigrés and ex-nobles who had made their peace with the government, and were desirous of advancement, or sought relief or compensation under the new régime, were at the lower end of the table. They were little noticed, or, if I said altogether neglected, I should be more correct. The Duc d'Uzeza [cicdevant], formerly one of the first as well as most

ancient peers of old France, was close to me. He was now a humble and distressed individual, divested of title and property, and seeking at the table of the minister of foreign affairs under the consular government for notice and assistance. He had come to Neuilly in a hired one-horse cabriolet without servant or companion. He was of a gentle, prepossessing, and rather youthful appearance, and seemed to bear his change of fortune with an admirable degree of philosophy and good humour, and was even playful upon his own situation, and spoke of the splendour and elevation of others without envy.

"Later, Madame Talleyrand's circle commenced. The corps diplomatique flowed in, and the minister for the rest of the evening transacted business with them, taking one aside at one time to one room, another to another. Madame Talleyrand maintained a good deal of state, and was attended, on entering the drawing-room, by two young females elegantly clothed in white, burning frankincense as she advanced. Mr. Fox alternately conversed or played cards. He, who in the retirement of St. Anne's Hill, appeared devoted to a rural and philosophic life, and never played after the payment of his debts by his party in 1793, was here the easy man of the world, conversing in their own languages with Frenchmen, Italians, and Spaniards, and admired by all as much for the amiability of his manners as he had long been for the splendour of his talents. The day after this dinner, and henceforth frequently, we dined at Neuilly. The drive home to Paris in these charming serene nights was not the least agreeable part of the excursion."

A drawing-room at Madame Bonaparte's seems to have been somewhat tedious. The ceremony was short, cold, and insipid. Madame, the disparity of whose age was ill-concealed by a great deal of rouge, sat at the head of the circle richly habited.

Bonaparte, after they had paid their compliments, came from an inner apartment, went round the circle, said a few words to the ladies, and retired. Mr. Fox stayed but a short time, having paid his compliments to madame. As she loved plants and understood botany, he found it agreeable to converse with her on this subject. She had enriched Malmaison by a very fine and choice collection of plants.

Lafayette pays a visit to Mr. Fox:

"One day, whilst transcribing and reading at the office of the Archives, a stranger, of interesting and graceful figure, entered the room. He advanced rapidly and embraced Mr. Fox with a countenance full of joy, while tears rolled down his cheeks. Mr. Fox testified equal emotion. It was M. de Lafayette. He had at a very early age visited London; they had become acquainted with one another, and they had not met again till now. Meanwhile, M. de Lafayette, born under a despotic régime, left all the luxuries and indulgences which privileged rank and fortune could afford to cross the Atlantic and offer his mite of aid to the Americans. He

built, at his own expense, a frigate, and by exertions, military and civil, contributed to the establishment of the United States; whilst his friend Mr. Fox in the English House of Commons laboured with equal zeal to obtain a peaceful acknowledgment of their claims. M. de Lafayette had come from the country to Paris to see Mr. Fox, and to invite him to his house. He lived about thirty miles from Paris, quite unconnected with and unconsulted by the government. Mr. Fox cheerfully agreed to visit him at La Grange."

Here is a pretty cabinet portrait of Madame Récamier:

"Madame Récamier gave a déjeuner at Clichy, to which Mr. Fox and party were invited, as also most of the distinguished persons at Paris. We went there about three o'clock. So much has been said of the beauty of the charming hostess that it would be idle to say more than that every one was captivated by it. But still more interesting than her beauty were her simple and unaffected manners, a genuine mildness and goodness of disposition obvious in all she said and did, with as little vanity as it is possible to conceive in a young woman so extravagantly admired. She received her visitors with singular ease and frankness. The house was pretty, with gardens extending to the river; in these the company walked till all were assembled. There for the first time we saw General Moreau. Mr. Fox addressed himself to him, and turned the conversation on Louis the Fourteenth; Moreau on this subject was dull, and did not give out one spark of intelligence. Afterwards, at table, he was free in his discourse about the army; but those who heard his conversation remarked that he manifested more want of thought than prudence in his manner of expressing himself. He was living in those days about ten or twelve miles from Paris, and was said to be much devoted to his wife and to hunting. Eugène Beauharnais, the viceroy of Italy, was also that day a guest of Madame Récamier."

Mr. Fox had become "a lion" at Paris. It was the fashion to ape Mr. Fox; his dress, his manner of speaking, his dinners, were imitated. It was the fashion to be a thinking man, and to think like Mr. Fox; the coxcombs did their best to model their features, or, at least, the expression of their countenances, upon his. At the opera he attracted every eye; he was followed as a sight through the streets; his portrait was in the window of every print-shop, and no medallions had such sale as those which bore the head of Mr. Fox. The artists alone felt dissatisfied, for he refused to sit for his picture.*

Madame Récamier one day called to take Mr. Fox out in her carriage; but he hesitated to accompany her. "Come," said the lady, with her bewitching smile, "I must keep my promise, and show you on the promenade. The

good people of Paris must always have their spectacle. Before you came, I was the fashion; it is a point of honour, therefore, that I should not appear jealous of you." So he consented.

An incident occurred at a visit by the first consul to the Louvre, which affords a fine subject for an historical painter. In one of the halls there was a very large and very handsome terrestrial globe, destined for the first consul, and very ingeniously constructed. One of the personages who accompanied Bonaparte, turning the globe, and putting his hand upon England, made the unhappy remark that "England occupied a very small space in the map of the world." "Yes," exclaimed Mr. Fox; "it is in that little island the English are born; it is in that little island they all wish to die; but," he added, extending his arms round the two oceans of the two Indies, "while they live, they fill the entire globe, and embrace it with their power." The first consul gave ready applause to this proud and well-timed sally.

Previous to leaving Paris for La Grange, Madame Cabarrus, ci-devant Tallien, gave a sumptuous dinner to Mr. Fox and other distinguished foreigners. Most of Mr. Fox's friends were at the dinner; but great was the surprise, and, indeed, displeasure of some English personages of political consequence, on finding that Mr. Arthur O'Connor (exiled for conspiracy) was one of the guests. Mr. Erskine was extremely uneasy lest some evil speaker should misrepresent the matter in England. Mr. Fox treated it as an unlucky incident which could not be avoided, and spoke to Mr. O'Connor just as usual.

On the 1st Vendémiaire (September 23rd) another levee was held, at which Mr. Fox was present. The ceremony was similar to that already described. It was the custom to invite those once presented at a levee to dinner on the subsequent one. Accordingly, Mr. Fox on this occasion dined with the first consul. Bonaparte, he said, talked a great deal. Mr. Fox was much pleased. After the dinner, which was a short one, the first consul retired with a select number to Madame Bonaparte's apartments in the Tuileries, where the rest of the evening was spent. Mr. Fox appeared to consider Bonaparte as a young man who was a good deal intoxicated with his success and surprising elevation. He did not doubt of his sincerity as to the maintenance of peace, though Bonaparte manifested some irritation against a part of Mr. Pitt's ministry, as having instigated, or been privy to, plots against his life, particularly that of the infernal machine; he actually named Mr. Windham as one who had abetted it. Mr. Fox did everything in his power to disabuse the mind of the first consul of such an idea, so far as his own positive contradiction, or, at least, his conviction most strongly expressed, could go. Bonaparte spoke a good deal of the probability of doing away with all difference between the inhabitants of the two worlds, of blending the black with the white, and having universal peace.

* There are two portraits of Mr. Fox at the historical gallery at South Kensington.

Mr. Fox's impressions respecting his conversations with Bonaparte are best given in his own words. In a letter written to Lord (then Mr.) Grey in December, just after his return from Paris, he says :

"My notion about Bonaparte's politics is this, that when I first went to Paris, he was foolishly sore about our newspapers, but not ill-disposed to the ministers, and still less to the country. At this time he was out of humour with Austria, and determined, as I suspect, not to give way a tittle to her. Afterwards, when he suspected (whether truly or falsely) that we should interfere, he began to be terribly afraid of a war, which might in France be imputed to his rashness. In consequence of this fear, he did make concessions by no means inconsiderable to Austria, and immediately felt bitter against us, who were the cause of his making them. But as that bitterness (according to my hypothesis) arises principally from the fear he has of our driving him into an unpopular war, I do not think it will for the present prevent peace; nor, indeed, if pacific counsels and language are used here, that it is at all likely to be lasting. You may depend upon it that commerce, and especially colonial commerce, is now the principal object; and upon these subjects they have a stupid admiration of our systems of the worst kind, slave-trade, prohibitions, protecting duties, and so on. However, bad as these systems may be, France must in some degree recover her commerce, and the more she does the more will she be afraid of a war with England. But what signifies France? Bonaparte can do what pleases *him*, without consulting the nation. This is not true in any country beyond a certain extent, and I feel morally certain that Bonaparte and all his friends are of opinion that war with England is the only event that can put his power in peril. An army is a most powerful instrument of government; but, that it is not in all cases one upon which dependance can be placed is proved by the history of every country where very enormous armies are maintained; and out of the army he cannot expect the approbation of any one individual, if he engages in any war with us to which he is not actually driven. Whatever ridicule may be thrown upon the title of 'Pacificator,' you may be sure that whatever hold he has (perhaps no great matter neither) upon the people of France arises from the opinion that he and he alone could make the peace, and that he will be the best able to maintain it. Now, after I have said all this, I admit the justness of your apprehensions, that the hostile language and 'attitudes' (if one must use the new-fangled word) of the two nations may produce war against the wishes of the two governments; and to lessen that danger, as far as I shall at present meddle in politics, shall be my aim."

On the 24th of September, Mr. Fox and his party left Paris for La Grange, the residence of Lafayette.

"The château was of a very singular construction, quadrangular, and ornamented at each

angle by Moorish towers, which had no unpleasant effect. Near the mansion was a ruined chapel. We drove into the court-yard. The family came into the hall to meet us, and received Mr. and Mrs. Fox with the heartiest welcome. It consisted of two daughters, a son and his wife, all young, and living with M. de Lafayette, as their brother and friend, his age being at this time about forty-nine or fifty. His benevolent countenance, his frank warm manner, and a placid contentedness, had altogether an irresistible charm for every one, and made him quite adored in his family. Madame de Lafayette, of the ancient family of the Noailles, with the high polish of the old nobility, was eloquent and animated, and fondly attached to her husband and her family. It is well known that M. de Lafayette had been arrested on leaving France in 1793, and thrown into the dungeons of Olmütz. He had been imprisoned a considerable time when Madame de Lafayette, unable any longer to bear her separation from him, determined to make an effort for his liberty, or to share his captivity, and she set out with her young children for Germany, where, at the feet of the emperor, she implored his majesty to release her husband, or to allow her to share his confinement. Her first request was refused, but she was permitted to visit her husband. For several years from that time she never left him, herself and daughter undergoing with him every inconvenience and misery. The damp of his prison hurt her health, and she never quite recovered from its effect. Bonaparte—to his honour be it remembered—interposed as soon as he had power, and insisted on M. de Lafayette's liberation. Accordingly, at the period of which I write (1802), something more than ten years after his first imprisonment, M. de Lafayette had not long arrived in France. The château and estate of La Grange, which madame, who was an heiress, had brought him, was all that remained of his fortune; everything else he had lost in the madness of revolutionary confiscation, and had not yet been able to procure restitution or compensation.

"To add to the interest of this scene, General Fitzpatrick, who had known M. de Lafayette in America, and had in 1794 moved an address to the House of Commons to beg the king to intercede for M. de Lafayette's liberation from his German dungeon (which motion was rejected by one hundred and fifty-three against forty-six votes), joined the party at La Grange, and was received most affectionately by the family. Lally Tolendal, also, whose father had, under the old régime, suffered so severe a fate, was at La Grange—an open, honest, agreeable man, telling a great many anecdotes relating to the revolution. In the evening he read extracts from Shakespeare, translated by himself into French. A few of M. de Lafayette's country neighbours were occasionally invited: his table was plentiful, and our evenings were diversified by conversation and chess, or some other game, as was most agreeable. Madame was extremely pleasing in conversation, and narrated her ad-

ventures and sufferings in Germany with great vivacity and ease.

"The château itself was ancient and simply furnished, and the wood adjoining was divided, in the old style, by long green alleys intersecting one another. M. de Lafayette spoke a good deal about America. He said that so great was the jealousy of the Americans against foreign troops, that he was obliged to reduce the number stipulated for, though he afterwards negotiated for more at home, and made the aid effectual. M. de Lafayette was now devoted to agricultural pursuits, and had entirely withdrawn from political affairs. His house and family were excellently regulated; each one had his or her own employment; till dinner every guest was left quite free to read, to walk, and explore the country, to write—in short, to act as he pleased. All re-assembled at dinner. The garden, which was large, but had been neglected, occupied a good deal of the attention of M. de Lafayette, and he was in the mornings engaged on his farms. Mr. Fox was very happy at La Grange; everything there suited his tastes, besides the gratification of seeing his friend, after a life of danger and years of captivity, sheltered at length on that moderate estate with all his family round him."

The day after his return to Paris, Mr. Fox is invited to dinner at Berthier's, the minister of war. The entertainment was splendid and striking. Military trophies decorated the great staircase; the dining-room was adorned with busts of Dessaix, Hoche, and two other generals, deceased. A great many living distinguished military characters were present; Berthier himself, agreeable, active, and penetrating, seemed equally fit for war or the cabinet; Massena, about forty-five or forty-six years of age, with piercing small black eyes, strong make, determined air, and lively motion. Bourgainville, celebrated circumnavigator of the globe, and Volney, author of the Ruins of Empires, were at this dinner. The form of invitation was in accordance with the republican style, in date, in designation of the year, and in the title, "République Française," affixed to it. An Austrian officer in full regimentals, in the midst of the French officers at Berthier's, was an attractive sight, and one very agreeable fruit of peace.

In a letter to Lord Holland, dated 21st November, 1802, Mr. Fox says:

"I have seldom spent time pleasanter than in Paris, yet I never in my life felt such delight in returning home. '*Hic amor, hæc patria est*;' mind, I mean the *hic* and the *hæc* in a very confined sense. Indeed, I have little or nothing to tell you of my life in Paris; the sight of Lafayette and his family, and the perfect attachment of them all to him, and of him to them, was very charming. The only new acquaintances I made worth mentioning were Livingstone, who, though deaf, is far the most agreeable American I ever conversed with, besides being a very well informed and sensible man; and Berthier, with whom, from shooting

together, I became very intimate. . . . I do not reckon Lord Henry Petty, because I have been speaking of foreigners only, but never did I see a young man I liked half so much. Whatever disappointments Lansdowne may have had in public life, and in a still more sensible kind in Lord Wycombe (his eldest son), he must be very unreasonable if he does not consider them all compensated in Lord Henry."

This Lord Henry was the late Marquis of Lansdowne.

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

COLONEL DESPARD'S PLOT.

IN 1779, Count d'Estaing threatened Jamaica with twenty-five sail and five-and-twenty thousand men. The French expedition proving a mere menace and ending in vapour, Governor Dalling, immediately on the disappearance of the hostile fleet below the horizon, planned an expedition against the Spanish colony of St. Juan, hoping to conquer Lake Nicaragua and the cities of Granada and Leon, and to cut off the communication of the Spaniards between their northern and southern American possessions. Lord George Germaine, secretary of state for the American department, approved the plan, more especially as great discontent against Spain was then prevailing in Peru. Nelson, a mere boy of a captain, just posted on board the Hinchinbrooke (twenty-eight guns), was ordered to convoy the five hundred men destined for this dangerous expedition from Port Royal to Cape Gracias à Dios, in Honduras.

Governor Dalling and his officers were entirely ignorant of the climate of Nicaragua, its dangers, and its geography. The fatal expedition began by starting too late in the season. All went well at first; the native tribes of the Mosquito shore came to the camp and promised boats for the St. Juan river. On reaching the mouth of the St. Juan, Nelson's services properly ceased, but finding none of the soldiers had ever been up the river, or knew any of the distances, he resolved to take them up himself and let his sailors help the Indians. Nelson, at this time, is described as a gaunt, strange-looking young man, dressed in stiff-laced uniform, and an old-fashioned waistcoat with decoo flaps, his lank unpowdered hair being tied in a stiff Hessian tail of extraordinary length. With him and among the troops was Captain Despard, a handsome resolute Irish officer, with bold and fine features; a determined, impetuous, and intrepid man, who, in spite of his mild expression, was Nelson's right hand. By day, the sailors and Indians had to drag the boats, under a fiery sun, over shoals and glaring sandbanks; by night, to endure the pestilential miasma and the heavy and poisonous dews. At last they reached a fort upon an island, and Nelson and Despard stormed it at the head of some seamen. Then they arrived at the castle of St. Juan, sixty-nine miles from the mouth of the river, and, like the river itself, walled in by almost impassable woods swarming with

snakes. Nelson was for instant assault, but the soldiers, once more on terra firma, grew bold and pedantic, and insisted on a regular siege, although the rains had set in, and fever was fast mowing down the men. The untoward place was taken only in time to turn it into a hospital. For months our brave men bore the horrors of this place, till the few survivors were too weak even to bury the dead. Only three hundred and eighty men survived out of one thousand eight hundred. Eighty-seven of the Hinchinbrooke's crew took to their beds in one night, and of the whole crew only ten eventually survived. The men of the transports all died, and some of the ships, being left without sailors, sank in the harbour. Nelson never recovered the effects of this campaign, and returned to England the wreck of his former self, to be instantly sent out to the North Seas, as if the Admiralty, as he remarked, had actually resolved upon his death.

Edward Marcus Despard, the strenuous captain whom we have seen hauling at boats with Nelson over the burning white sand-banks of the detestable St. Juan river, and storming the fort at the head of the seamen of the Hinchinbrooke, was the cadet of an old and respectable family in Queen's County, and he had the warm heart and strong passions of his race. He was the youngest of six brothers, five of whom were in the army or the navy. He was born in 1750 or 1751, and in 1766 entered the army as an ensign in the 5th Regiment. He afterwards exchanged to the 79th, and rose by degrees from lieutenant to quartermaster, captain-lieutenant and captain. In all these posts he served with credit and distinction, and was noticed and rewarded by General Meadows and the Duke of Northumberland. For the last twenty years he had been detached from his own corps, and entrusted with offices peculiarly responsible, and requiring experience, courage, and sagacity. He was chief engineer in Nelson's expedition, and obtained great praise for his valour and endurance from his commander, Captain Polson. He was then employed to construct public works at Jamaica, and executed the task so well and so promptly that he received the thanks of the council and assembly of the island; he was appointed by the governor commander-in-chief of the island of Rattan and its dependencies; and on the Spanish Main and on the Mosquito shore he took rank as lieutenant-colonel and field engineer. A man evidently of an organising and independent mind, he now especially distinguished himself by leading the inhabitants of Cape Gracias à Dios against the Spaniards, and retaking from the Dons the important settlement of Black River. For this useful service Despard again received the thanks of the governor, council, and assembly of Jamaica, and, what was more, of King George himself. In 1783 he was made colonel, and in 1784 first commissioner for settling the boundary lines of the South American territory ceded to Britain by Spain. Profoundly versed in Central American affairs, and able to

handle the Mosquito Indians, Nicaraguans, and Spaniards with great tact, knowledge, and skill, Colonel Despard had fair reason to expect that he might some day become governor of Jamaica itself. He was soon appointed our Superintendent on the coast of Honduras, where the mahogany trade required watching, and he obtained many important commercial privileges for us from the crown of Spain. Factions, however, arose at Honduras, and Colonel Despard was accused by the opposition of various misdemeanours, probably rather the result of imprudence or pride than of any real criminality. Factions often send a colonial governor home in disgrace, if they can get rid of him in no other way.

The result, indeed, proved his entire innocence, for, after two years' importunity and miserable degradation in lobbies and ante-chambers (enough alone to craze anybody—how many madmen and suicides has it made?), an official inquiry was instituted with the usual sluggish formality and fuss, and the result was, that Colonel Despard was at last told by the ministers that there was no charge against him worthy of further investigation, that his Majesty had thought fit to abolish the office of superintendent at Honduras, or that he would have been reinstated in his post, but he was assured, *foi de ministre*, that his great services were not forgotten, and should in due time meet their reward. The real fact, probably, was, that the American department had delayed the business till all about it was forgotten; fresh men had arisen who had not been cognisant of poor Despard's courage, energy, and good sense, on whose minds was left some office tradition of somebody having done something wrong somewhere; and as it might have been Despard or some one of his officials, or some one else at Honduras whom nobody knew, they determined to shelve the importunate and troublesome colonel, whom no rebuff would drive from the Whitehall door. The Greeks always punished an unsuccessful general, and it has been generally a rule with English ministers to make a scapegoat of a blundering admiral, as Voltaire sardonically said of Byng, "*pour encourager les autres*." It is even now observed that the Admiralty never give another vessel to a captain who has lost a man-of-war. Carelessness or misfortune, drunkenness or excess of caution, all one, he is thrown to the lions of public opinion. It may be a wise practice, but it is desperately cruel. We all know what Nelson suffered from the Admiralty of his day; its mean subterfuges, its idleness, its injustice. When he returned from the West Indies, broken in health, and was kept from mere malice (because he had been exposing speculations against government) five months at the Nore, and when his vessel was turned into a slop and receiving ship, he spoke of "the ungrateful service," and said, as he stepped from the *Boreas* on to the shore of the Medway, "It is my firm and unalterable determination never again to set my foot on board a king's ship."

He was always denouncing "the accursed system" of turning crews over from ship to ship, so that they could never become attached to the vessel or their officers. He was constantly battling against the dishonest delays of pay.

In 1801, there was great disaffection among the navy. When Admiral Mitchell's squadron was suddenly ordered from Bantry Bay to pursue the Brest fleet to the West Indies, the sailors mutinied; nor was the disaffection quelled until fourteen of the ringleaders swung from the yard-arm. The ideal liberty that the French had first attempted to hold up as a standard of the proper condition of man, so long the slave of bad kings and the beast of burden of brutal barons, was still producing discontent in men's minds wherever liberty was still imperfect. Secret political societies were busy in England, in the barrack and the fore-castle, the factory and the tavern, enrolling men who desired more freedom and an extension of political privileges. It was no longer possible to maintain the old boundaries, for the conditions had changed. The bulk of these agitators were honest and thoughtful foreseers of the future; but there were among them a few soured and disappointed persons, like ill-used Colonel Despard, who were impatient for swifter changes, and were for breaking in the doors that refused to open. We must have suffered as they had, before we can sufficiently know their feelings, or sufficiently pity their fate. Nature is slow, reasoned the cooler philosophers of their party; it took centuries before Egypt was formed by the alluvion of the Nile, or the coral island became Otaheiti. Yes, said the desperate men of progress, but nature works also through the lightning, the hurricane, the storm, the volcano, and the earthquake. Who shall say which works the better: the coral insect or the avalanche?

Gradually the neglected and injured soldier entered into the more dangerous and desperate schemes of the Reformers of 1801. His mind became absorbed by the one idea of his own wrongs and those of his country. He mixed with discontented men, who talked of nothing else. Persons of Despard's temperament soon persuade themselves that to avenge themselves is to avenge the wrongs of millions. The desperate conspirator always believes himself a martyr. Even infamous Fieschi thought himself a Curtius; and that broken card-sharper, Thistlewood, posed himself under the very noose, as a Mutius Scaevola. Despard began to talk against the government in an unguarded way, at taverns, in the Park, and at meetings. He became conspicuous, and the Habeas Corpus being at that time suspended whenever there were fish in the river, he was soon snapped up, and lodged powerless, unheard, and without appeal, in Coldbath Fields, then a true Bastille, quite as dangerous to liberty as those black towers that once frowned over the Port St. Antoine. Despard went into Coldbath Fields a Louvet; he left it a Marat. His ran-cour turned to malignancy, his hatred to

frenzy. He was now not for agitation, but for assassination and revolt. He collected round him all the disaffected soldiers in town, and drew up a wild scheme to be instantly executed.

His two usual places of meeting were the Oakley Arms, Oakley-street, Lambeth, and the Flying Horse, Newington. On November 12, 1802, John Emblin, a watchmaker, was taken to the Queen's Arms, Vauxhall, by a soldier named Lander. The men present were members of one of the many societies which looked to Despard as their head. He was known to them to be a neglected and disgraced colonel, newly out of prison for high treason, and his rank, education, and desperate views rendered him perfectly fit for their purpose. The men then went on to the Flying Horse, in the Clapham-road, and there saw Despard, the leader, in disguise; some conspirators named Broughton, Windsor, and Smith, were drinking with him in a private room, and speaking of the form used at the Tower in passing the keys. Colonel Despard said the country was ready; the attack was to be made in the country and London on the same day; the stage and the mail-coaches were to be stopped. Colonel Despard also said that the whole of the royal family must be secured, and that, if necessary, he would attack the king with his own hand. It was then agreed that the Bank should be seized and the Tower taken. Windsor said with one hundred men he would take the Tower himself. The colonel said the arms at the Bank—six hundred—had been rendered useless by taking some part off. Lander afterwards remarked it would be prudent to have a division march from the Tower to New-street, Bishopsgate-street, to secure the arms of the East India Company; to go from thence to the Artillery Ground, where they would get more arms, and secure the pieces of artillery; then to march forward and assist at the attack upon St. James's. The colonel, on another day, objected to Lander's plan, but spoke of taking the Bank and Tower, and destroying the telegraph; he also thought that St. Paul's would be a good place for a garrison. It was resolved to raise companies of ten men, with an eleventh to take the command as captain. The oldest captain of five companies was to take the command of these fifty men, and was to be called colonel of that sub-division. There were divisions ready in the Borough, Blackwall, Marylebone, Spitalfields, and Whitechapel. This being settled, Colonel Despard said: "A regular organisation was necessary; people were everywhere ripe, particularly in Leeds, Sheffield, Birmingham, and all the large towns." The attack was to be made when his Majesty went to the Parliament House. "His Majesty must be put to death. I have weighed the matter well, and my heart is callous."

There were cards printed with a form of oath, and these were read over and kissed by all new proselytes, who then took copies to distribute. The following was the oath:

"CONSTITUTION.

"The independence of Great Britain and Ireland. An equalisation of civil, political, and religious rights. An ample provision for the families of the heroes who shall fall in the contest. A liberal reward for distinguished merit. These are the objects for which we contend; and to obtain these objects we swear to be united. In the awful presence of Almighty God, I, A. B., do voluntarily declare that I will endeavour, to the utmost of my power, to obtain the objects of this union; namely, to recover those rights which the Supreme Being, in His infinite bounty, has given to all men; that neither hopes nor fears, rewards nor punishments, shall ever induce me to give any information, directly or indirectly, concerning the business, or of any member of this or any similar society. So help me God."

Wood, a soldier, and one of the most desperate of the gang, had proposed a wild scheme. On the north side of the parade, in St. James's Park, there still stands, flanking the Treasury, a long Egyptian gun, taken by us at Alexandria. We have most of us carelessly passed it a thousand times in the sun and rain. Wood proposed to secretly load this gun, adjust it, then get himself placed sentinel over it on the day when parliament was opened, and fire it at the king's coach. To use the very words, afterwards sworn to at the trial, this desperate man said at the Oakley Arms, openly before his comrades, and with their approval: "I will post myself sentry over the great gun in the park, and load it, and fire at his Majesty's carriage as it passes in going to the House." Wood was a soldier, and in the course of his duty might sometimes be sentinel at that gun. He also spoke of the Mall, between the private gate of his Majesty and Buckingham House, as being the most proper place in which to attack the king, because there would be no Horse Guards there when his Majesty came out of his private gate, after levee-day, to go to Buckingham House.

Broughton then drew aside Emblin, the new comer, and said, "My boy, we have the completest plan in the world, which will do the business without any trouble. It is to load the great gun in the Park with four balls, or chain-shot, and fire it at his Majesty as he returns from the House." Then, with a kind of sneer, he said, "He would be d—d if that did not send them to h—."

Emblin, unaccustomed to blood, replied, "Good God! do you consider how many people will be in the Park that day, and how many lives you will take away?" Wood said, "Let them get out of the way; it will play h— with the houses at the Treasury and round about there." Some other soldier then observed, "The cannon might be too low;" another said, "It might be easily raised an inch;" and a third man remarked, "But if it misses his Majesty?" Broughton replied, "Then, d—n him, we must man-handle him."

All the rough men assembled in the smoking-

room of the suburban tavern round the grim disguised leader, applauded the scheme, and agreed that it must be done before the *man-eaters* (parliament) met. At the Coach and Horses, Whitechapel, and the Tyger, on Tower Hill, other meetings were held; and it was decided by Despard first to kill the king, then attack the Parliament House and the Tower. The colonel was generally spoken of among the other conspirators by the playful synonym of "the nice man." The men were desperate, the plot was ripe, parliament was soon to meet, and the gun on the parade was ready for the chain-shot.

On the 16th of November, 1802, the conspirators met in an upper room of the Oakley Arms, in an obscure part of that dim damp brick-kiln region of Lambeth. There were about thirty soldiers and Irishmen of the humblest class in the room, surrounding a stern-faced thick-set man in shabby clothes, and with a plaid cotton handkerchief wound round his neck.

Their clamorous talk is about cutting telegraphs, attacking the Tower and India House, and blowing the King to perdition. Wood is earnest about putting plenty of balls in the gun on the parade, and the plan of attack on the coach, if the desperate shot failed, is arranged. Suddenly a diabolical fury seems to seize Colonel Despard. He leaps from his chair, eager at once to fall on his persecutors with the sword. He shouts "One and all!" and the thirty men push for the door; but a cluster of rough armed men stop them there, and leap in among them. It is the patrol. There is a scuffle with the colonel about searching him, and on him, when searched, nothing is found; there is a great calling of coaches, and forcing refractory men in; and then twelve of Despard's men are driven to the Tothill-fields Bridewell, and twenty to the new prison at Clerkenwell. Ten other persons, trapped in another room, and proved to have no connexion with the colonel's party, were at once discharged. The colonel remained obstinately silent.

The king's evidence was a spy named Windsor, a private in the Grenadier Guards (First Battalion). He had been drawn in by Francis, who swore him in at a meeting at a public-house in St. Giles's. Francis informed Mr. Bownas, an army agent, who had given him directions what to do.

The privy council instantly issued a special commission, composed of four judges, which was opened at the new court-house, at Horse-monger-lane, Southwark, January 20, 1803.

The commissioners were Lord Chief Justice Ellenborough, lord president; Sir Alexander Thomson, Sir Simon Le Blanc, Sir Alan Chambre, Sir John William Rose, Serjeants Remington, Bailey, and Onslow.

Lord Ellenborough delivered his charge on the 21st to the grand jury. The same day the jury returned a true bill for high treason against Edward Marcus Despard, John Wood, Thomas Broughton, John Francis, Thomas Phillips, Thomas Newman, Daniel Tyndall, John Doyle,

James Sedgwick Wratten, William Lander, Arthur Graham, Samuel Smith, and John Macnamara.

At the request of the prisoner Despard, Mr. Serjeant Best and Mr. Gurney were assigned his counsel.

All the prisoners pleaded Not Guilty. Mr. Jekyll and Mr. Hovell were assigned counsel to all the prisoners except Despard.

The counsel for the crown were Mr. Attorney-General, Mr. Solicitor-General, Mr. Serjeant Shepherd, Mr. Plumer, Mr. Garrow, Mr. Common Serjeant, Messrs. Wood, Fielding, and Abbott; solicitor, Joseph White, Esq.

Macnamara was an Irish carpenter; Graham, a slater; Wratten, a shoemaker; Broughton, a carpenter; Wood and Francis were soldiers. It was the old cruel story of those unhappy times. A reckless conspiracy, fomented by spies until it was ripe, and then crushed by a stupid but firm minister. It was spies who had urged on all the treasonable conversation.

Mr. Serjeant Best made a brave fight of it for poor Despard, contending that there was no proof of his sharing in the attempt to seduce the army from its allegiance. "It is a rule," he said, "of law upon the subject of treason, that the crime cannot be made out by mere words, but must be evidenced by acts, deeds, or writings. I mean to say that it is not upon the parole testimony of witnesses only that a man is to be convicted. But it may be said there is a printed paper found in this case. I do not care whether that paper be treasonable or not, is it connected with Colonel Despard, except by the testimony of Francis, one of the most infamous men alive? According to the evidence, the traitorous scheme was on the eve of being carried into execution. The Tower was to be seized on the 6th of September, and yet no evidence is offered to show why this important step was not carried out. Gentlemen, there were no deeds of preparation; there are no writings, the possession or knowledge of which is brought home to Colonel Despard.

"It is a rule of evidence that the case shall be made out by credible witnesses. I say accomplices may be called, but their evidence ought not to be regarded unless a complete crime is proved by other witnesses; that is, their evidence may be used to corroborate the evidence of other and credible witnesses. Ask yourselves whether one tittle of evidence to affect the gentleman who now stands before you has been proved in this case, except by the evidence of accomplices. Unless his being present at the meeting at the Oakley Arms is sufficient to prove he is guilty, there is no other circumstance but what comes from accomplices. It may be said that though the testimony of one of the four—Windsor, Francis, Blades, and Emblin—would be insufficient, yet the concurrent testimony of the four is sufficient. But, gentlemen, if men conspire to fasten a crime about the neck of others, they will take care that all their stories agree. Show there is ground to presume they have concerted

together for the purpose of charging an offence against Colonel Despard which belongs wholly to themselves, and there is an end of all their evidence. In the sequel of what I have to say, I think I shall prove that such a conspiracy does exist in this case.

"The account given by them is improbable. Fourteen or fifteen persons assemble at a common tap-house, with no arms but tobacco-pipes, and form a conspiracy to overturn a government supported by the loyalty of millions. The men who have undertaken to do this are of the lowest order in society; they have no foreign connexion, and they have the enormous sum of fifteen shillings and sixpence in the treasury. You have no evidence of even forty men being ready at one period; yet the Tower was to be taken, the mail-coaches stopped, the Bank seized, and the king attacked while surrounded by the Horse Guards. Is it likely that Colonel Despard should have said he would break through the Horse and Foot Guards and do it with his own hand? I think I have demonstrated that a more improbable scheme never existed. I am persuaded a traitorous scheme did exist, that some men conceived the design of seducing the army from their allegiance to the king, but, finding the integrity of the soldiers an insurmountable barrier, they felt they must devise some means of securing themselves from the consequences of their crime. There was but one way—and Windsor pointed out what that was—to secure himself by charging others. After telling Mr. Bownas he was weary of the treason, yet still to attend the meetings, still to do what only the most infamous man could do; although he knew the consequences, although he pretended to repent, to seduce other persons into it for the purpose of betraying them. What had these persons to do then? That which Windsor did. And yet it is on the testimony of such men as Windsor and the others that you are to say this gentleman, whom I will prove to be a man of character, and whom you must presume innocent till proved guilty, is guilty of a crime.

"The circumstance of Colonel Despard being degraded from his rank as colonel after serving his country abroad, was well known—he was known to be an injured man. This made the conspirators look upon him as a man upon whose shoulders the treason could be conveniently thrown. He was invited to their meetings, they representing themselves as injured soldiers. And he was induced by sympathy to attend these meetings. It does not follow that he was therefore a traitor; every person who attended was not a traitor; thirty were taken, fifteen discharged. Although he was suspected of treason in 1798, and detained in prison three years, yet, as he was discharged, I have a right to presume he was wholly innocent."

The witnesses to Despard's character were of the highest distinction. Lord Nelson had not seen him since 1780, but he then considered him an ornament to the army, a loyal man, and a brave officer. Sir Alured Clarke had known

him thirty years, always considered him a loyal subject and a zealous officer. Sir Evan Nepean, who had known the prisoner since he was under suspicion, said the testimonials he had brought from Jamaica were of the highest order.

Lord Ellenborough summed up—mercilessly, as might have been expected—and defended the credibility of the witnesses. He (Despard) had compassed the death of the king, which was treason by the statute of Edward the Third; and he had also compassed to seize the king's person, and conspired to depose him, which was treason by a recent statute. The jury, after twenty-five minutes' consultation, returned a verdict of guilty against Despard and nine other prisoners. Despard was recommended to mercy on account of his former good character, and the services he had rendered to his country.

Colonel Despard, when allowed to speak, expressed his satisfaction with his counsel, denounced the witnesses, and denied that he had ever seduced them from their allegiance, or even had the smallest conversation with them on the subject. Lord Ellenborough, in passing sentence, referred to the wild system of anarchy and bloodshed planned by the conspirators, who had promised to make ample provision for the families "of those heroes who should fall in the struggle." He then delivered the sentence: "That they be taken back to the prison, conveyed from thence to the place of execution on hurdles, there to be hanged, but not till they be dead, but that while still alive their bodies be taken down, their entrails taken out and burnt before their eyes, their heads severed from their bodies, and their bodies to be quartered, the heads and quarters to be at the king's disposal." Colonel Despard and the other prisoners appeared much less affected than the spectators.

In prison, Despard and his companions behaved with resignation and fortitude. Lord Nelson's mediation for his old comrade was in vain. The parting between Despard and his wife was borne by both with dignified fortitude, and she waved her handkerchief to him as the coach was driven from the prison. That was at three; at five she came again for a second and last farewell and was refused admittance, the turnkey wishing to spare the prisoner any further pain. Mrs. Despard expressed her indignation at this cruelty, and declared her firm devotion to the cause for which her husband was about to suffer. From three to half-past six, Colonel Despard paced his cell in agitation, then threw himself jaded on his pallet, and slept for an hour and a half. When he awoke, he exclaimed, in an excited way, to the jailer who was there on guard:

"From me they shall receive no information. From me? No, not for all the gifts, the gold, and jewels of the crown!"

He then composed himself and became silent. He refused to attend service at the chapel on Sunday; did not receive the sacrament; and declined the assistance of a clergyman, saying that he understood very well what he was

about, and that such interference would only perplex him the more. When his solicitor came that evening, the colonel told him he wished to be buried with his countrymen at Pancras. At daylight that morning, the drop, scaffold, and gallows, had been erected on the top of the jail, and great crowds had assembled to see the sight. The Bow-street patrol and detachments of the Guards were stationed round the jail day and night, for the ministry was still very uncertain how deeply it was detested.

The prisoners all slept about two hours, and, except their leader, spent the rest of their time with their priest and their dissenting ministers, preparing for death. Before daybreak, seven coffins, two large bags of sawdust, and the executioner's block, arrived at the prison. At four o'clock on Monday, February 21, the drum beat at the Horse Guards for the cavalry to assemble; soon afterwards, crowds began to fill the Westminster-road and all the approaches to Horse-monger-lane. At five, the bell of St. George's commenced tolling. At six, Lord Cathcart arrived at the head of the Life Guards; troops were stationed at the Obelisk, the Borough-road, and the Elephant and Castle; other troops patrolled the various adjacent streets. The officers, runners, and petty constables, were formed two deep in front of the prison, leaving a space of twenty yards from the walls unoccupied.

At half-past six the prison bell rang, and the cells were instantly unlocked. Five of the prisoners attended prayers, four confessed they had done wrong, but not to the extent of the evidence, and all said they were never happier in their lives. Despard and Macnamara then had their irons knocked off and their arms and hands bound. The sheriff kindly asked the colonel if he could render him any last service. The colonel thanked him in a gentleman-like way, but replied that he could not. He had previously dressed with composure, and drank two glasses of wine. He was well clad, in a blue double-breasted coat with gilt buttons, a cream-coloured waistcoat with narrow gold lace binding, and a flannel inside vest with scarlet top turned over—a fashion still seen among elderly country gentlemen only a few years back. He also wore grey breeches, top-boots, and a brown surtout. Before he was bound, he shook hands cordially with his solicitor, and returned him many thanks for his kind zeal and attention.

On hearing the clink and fall of the colonel's irons, the five prisoners in the chapel rose from their knees, and their arms and hands also were bound. The sledge—the body of a small cart, lined with straw, and drawn by two horses—was now ready, and the sheriff was summoned. When Despard saw the sledge, he smiled, and said contemptuously: "Ha! ha! What nonsensical mummery is this!" He then retired to the back and motioned to Francis, who had made way for him to go first. A regiment of cavalry were drawn up in Kent-street, and several companies of

foot soldiers were placed between the King's Bench and Blackman-street. The Bow-street officers were in two ranks from the inner prison gate to the keeper's house, and the procession passed between them. There were fifty Bow-street runners on the scaffold. The roofs of the neighbouring houses were crowded, as well as the adjoining windows and fields. The ghastly procession commenced exactly at half-past eight. The sledge bore two prisoners at a time. First, Macnamara and Graham; then, Wratten and Broughton; then, Wood and Francis—all composed, and most of them smiling.

Colonel Despard came last and alone. He looked well, and stepped into the cart with quiet indifference. On either side of him sat executioners with naked cutlasses. The bell then began to toll. The seven coffins were placed side by side on the coffin near the ominous sack of sawdust. One by one the prisoners ascended, and had each his cord fastened round his neck. Macnamara, who had been recently married, bowed to the sympathising people, and then prayed aloud. Graham looked pale and ghastly, and was silent. Wratten came up firm. Broughton smiled as he ran gaily up the stairs; but when the rope was put on, he smiled no more, but turned pale, and prayed earnestly. Francis, a tall, handsome fellow, was perfectly composed.

Colonel Despard ascended the scaffold with great firmness; his countenance underwent not the slightest change while the awful ceremony of fastening the rope round his neck, and placing the cap on his head, was performing. He even assisted the executioner in adjusting the rope, and was very particular in placing the noose under his left ear. He looked at the multitude assembled with perfect calmness. The clergyman, who ascended the scaffold after the prisoners were tied up, spoke to him a few words as he passed; the colonel bowed, and thanked him. The ceremony of fastening up the prisoners being finished, the colonel advanced as near as he could to the edge of the scaffold, and made the following speech to the multitude:

"Fellow Citizens,

"I come here, as you see, after having served my country—faithfully, honourably, and usefully served it—for thirty years and upwards, to suffer death upon a scaffold for a crime of which I protest I am not guilty. I solemnly declare that I am no more guilty of it than any of you who may be now hearing me. But though his Majesty's ministers know as well as I do that I am not guilty, yet they avail themselves of a legal pretext to destroy a man, because he has been a friend to truth, to liberty, and justice—" [There was a considerable huzza from part of the populace the nearest to him, but who, from the height of the scaffold from the ground, could not, for a certainty, distinctly hear what was said. The colonel proceeded.]—"because he has been a friend to the poor and distressed. But, citizens, I hope and trust, not

withstanding my fate, and the fate of those who no doubt will soon follow me, that the principles of freedom, of humanity, and of justice, will finally triumph over falsehood, tyranny, and delusion, and every principle hostile to the interests of the human race. And now, having said this, I have little more to add—" [The colonel's voice seemed to falter here. He paused a moment as if he had meant to say something more, but had forgotten it.] He then concluded in the following manner:—"I have little more to add, except to wish you all health, happiness, and freedom, which I have endeavoured, as far as was in my power, to procure for you, and for mankind in general."

The colonel spoke in a firm and audible tone of voice, but left off sooner than was expected. There was no public expression, either of approbation or disapprobation, when he had concluded his address.

As soon as the colonel had ceased speaking, the clergyman prayed with five of the prisoners. Macnamara talked earnestly with the clergyman of his own persuasion. Despard surveyed the populace, and made a short answer, which was not distinctly heard, to some few words addressed to him by Francis, who was next him. The clergyman now shook hands with each of them. Colonel Despard bowed, and seemed to thank him as he shook hands with him.

The caps were then drawn, and some of the prisoners uttered a last prayer. At seven minutes before nine, the platform dropped, and seven dead men swung in the air. The colonel opened and clenched his hands twice; that was all. The rest died instantly, all but Broughton and Francis, who struggled for a few moments until the executioners pulled their legs.

In about half an hour the seven bodies were cut down, Colonel Despard's first. The bodies were then one by one partly stripped, placed upon sawdust, and the heads severed upon the block by surgeons engaged for the purpose. An executioner then lifted each head by the hair, and carrying it alternately to the right and left parapet, shouted to the people:

"This is the head of a traitor!" and so on, head after head. There was some hooting and hissing during the performance of this brutal mediæval ceremony, more especially when Despard's head was exhibited. The bodies were then placed in the shells, and delivered to friends for interment. The people took off their hats when the bleeding heads were raised up, but there was no disturbance. Many people fainted in the crowd. The government, apprehending a riot, had sent rockets to the governor of the prison to signal for more troops if more should be required.

The body of Colonel Despard, having lain at Mount-row, opposite the Asylum, was taken away on the 1st of March, by his friends, with a hearse and three mourning coaches, and interred near the north door of St. Paul's Cathedral, St. Paul's-churchyard. The crowd

was great; but when the grave was covered in, the people immediately and quietly dispersed. The City marshal was present, lest there should be any disturbance on the occasion.

The remains of the other six were deposited in one grave, in the vault under the Reverend Mr. Harper's chapel, in the London-road, St. George's-fields.

A DAY ON THE DEEP SEA.

I DON'T think deep-sea fishing is open to the old sneer about a line with a worm at one end and a fool at the other. In the first place, a worm is rarely used at one end; and in the next, when it comes to hauling in a big fish of sixty pounds or so, that will pull like a baker, fight like a man, and bark like a dog, something better than a fool is needed at the other end.

The day's fishing alluded to in my title I enjoyed (*sic*) during a visit to Guernsey in the autumn of last year. Considering what capital sport sea-fishing really is, and the facilities afforded for its practice by our coasts, it is a subject of surprise that a pastime so readily accessible should be so generally ignored.

Down at "Point," I found out an old fisherman, and made known my desire to accompany him on his next turn. The Guernsey peasantry and labourers, with scarcely an exception, possess a native gentleness and ease of manner that go far to corroborate their claim as descendants of Huguenot refugees of high birth. Most of them speak good English, with a very pretty accent, as well as a somewhat unintelligible patois of Norman-French. Guernsey folk have a much neater way of getting you to repeat a request than an abrupt British "Eh?" or "What?" or the still more unceremonious "What say?"

"What do you please?" asked the old man, not quite understanding my proposition.

I told him I "pleased" fishing, not delicate fine-weather sport, but a genuine experience of real rough fisherman's fishing. It took a vast amount of persuasion to induce old Pierre Jacques to allow me to go with him. There "weren't much fish," 'twas "a bad tide," "too much sea on," "didn't know if he should go out to-day," or if he did "where he should get bait," and so on. In point of fact, there *was* a deal of "sea on" at the time, and being not a little doubtful of my own ability to stand such a quantity, perhaps I should have been less anxious to press the matter but for feeling a little piqued at the old man's reluctance to go. He gave way at last, however (almost to my chagrin, I own, for there certainly *was* a deal of "sea on"), and trotted off with me to the quay to get some bait. Detaching one from many small egg-shaped wicker baskets I saw moored to stakes in the water, he opened it and showed me the bait—writhing, glancing little sand-eels, of the sort known as "sand-launce," which glistened

like silver and purple in the water. Making the basket fast to the stern of a boat, old Pierre bade me step in, and rowed off to his fishing smack, a large, wide, flat-bottomed craft, drawing scarce a foot of water, built very strong and stiff to withstand heavy seas, and carrying two little sails, with peaks, schooner-wise, but without fore-sheet or jib.

On board we found the old man's "boy," "young Pierre," as he called him—a bronzed, stalwart child indeed, tall, and broad-chested and forty, if a day. Their first care was to make me into a waterproof parcel by wrapping me up in oil-cloths and canvas, and neatly tying me round and across with twine, explaining as they did so that they "expected it wetfish." Next, each of the two fishermen went down into an enormous pair of leggings, which came up and tied round their necks with a string, like a long two-legged bag having arm-holes. A great slouchy oilskin coat, with a high collar that fitted in under their canvas hats, completed their armour.

Would I steer? Wouldn't I? I caught at the chance, for, rough as it was, even a tiller was something to hold on by. Well, our course was a mile out, by those rocks; I should see a buoy there—that was their buoy, and there was their "trot"—all I had to do was to make for the buoy, and "keep her to the wind." That was all very well, but it seemed as though we should never keep the craft to the water, she had such an unaccountable propensity for mounting up skywards, and trying to leap right out of the sea, then rushing down into a wave, and hurtling over on to the next one, much as a young bird trying to fly. However, I endeavoured to put a good face on it, and asked the men if they would have some tobacco.

"Please?" inquired old Pierre, interrogatively, meaning, as I found, "what did I please?" and not "thank you." I therefore repeated my offer, somewhat rashly adding that, for my own part, I required a pretty constant supply of the weed. "No, please," they didn't smoke; and if I intended to do so, I had better be quick about it. The same idea occurred to me simultaneously, for we were pitching about at such a wild rate I could not predicate with any degree of certainty that a few minutes more would find me in the same mind.

"Keep her up to it, sir," said the fishermen, encouragingly. She was already so much "up to it," that the water came splashing in sheets over us all, nearly blinding me as to where we were going; she was so much "up to it," that I could seldom see anything ahead of us but some great crested hill of glistening water, up which our boat was always going to climb, or poised for a moment on its top before darting down with a swash and a hiss into the seething valley below. She was so much "up to it," in fact, that when the first wave that washed over us had put out my pipe, nearly washing it down my throat into the bargain, I let it go without a pang.

"Hi, now sir, steady! Here we are. Sharp

up to the wind when I say now—now!" As I put up the helm, young Pierre grappled the buoy, and the old man struck the masts, leaving us tossing about with one end of the "trot" across our bows. The "trot" or "bolter," as it is sometimes called, is a strong line, a rope indeed, some three hundred yards long, from which depend four or five hundred hooks, snooded on strong water-cord or wired strands at regular intervals of about two feet. It is buoyed across the run of the tide, secured in its place by a grapnel, and floated by large corks, which dot out its track in the sea. In this position it becomes like a long row of baited meat-hooks, on which the fish come and hang themselves up. We commenced what is called "under-running the trot," that is to say, hauling the "trot" over our boat, taking off the fish, and fresh baiting the hooks with offal and pieces of mackerel and shad.

We had a pretty good haul, for there were a John Dory, two or three fine turbot, numbers of brill, and several great gaping skate of twenty pounds and more apiece, besides mackerel, and pollack, and smaller fry. The two first-named sorts and some of the largest brill are what the fishermen term "royal fish." Nearly all of them find their way to the London market, which depends in a great measure for its supply on Guernsey and the other Channel Islands. These great flat fish are not easily unhooked by a novice, having great strength in their tails, wherewith they can give the unwary a very severe blow. The skate especially is a very ugly customer to deal with in more senses than one, for it is the most hideous fish that swims. However, our fishermen put one hand into their great gills, throwing them one by one into a kind of tank that is "forrard," in a very matter-of-fact sort of way, occasionally administering a blow with an iron pin to some fish more unruly than the rest. Having baited and laid down our "trot" again (I may mention it is an offence punishable with transportation to haul another person's "trot"), we step our masts and set sail for more active fishing, in which we meditate hooking the fish, instead of leaving it to them to hook themselves.

Our fishing-ground is thirteen miles off, right at the back of the island, so we have a long run before us. We go down with the tide, keeping well out from land, since the island is so rocky it is dangerous to coast it when there is much "sea." We fish at low water and about two hours into the "young flood" (these being the universal sea-fishing hours), and come back again at night with the turn of the tide.

During a three hours' sail, tacking down against the wind, my whole energies were devoted to holding on, to prevent, on the one hand, being pitched head first into the fish-tank "forrard," and, on the other, so to manage to dodge the waves that broke over us, as to avoid being washed over the stern. Now and then, I believe, I made a sickly attempt to smile, but so palpably artificial was the effort, that on every such occasion old Pierre would

ask if I didn't feel well. I kept on assuring him I was quite well in so marked a manner that he invariably recommended me to try and nibble a biscuit and take a drop of brandy. It being utterly impossible to act upon his advice, since when I opened my mouth a wave was sure to fill it, carrying biscuit and brandy to the fishes, I gave up the attempt in despair, and framed some utterly transparent excuse (but which I thought wholly inscrutable at the time) for abandoning the helm. I then took to contemplating the sky, doubtless with a very fixed expression of countenance, until I became so giddy I could not tell which was sky and which was sea, for the billowy clouds were heaving and rolling like the water. Fully aware of feeling very particularly unwell, I was actually debating in my mind about offering the men a handsome consideration to toss me overboard, when a violent lurch of the boat hurled me right across into old Pierre's lap. With consummate coolness, the old fellow merely inquired, "What did I please?"

The exclamation "Oh!" is a word peculiarly adapted to sufferers, because, though a short one, you may yet make a great deal of it by sighing it out in a helplessly lugubrious drawl, as I believe I did. What I am afraid I meant by it at the time was, "Oh! fisherman, fisherman!—take all the ready money about my person, only take me up quick, and put me ashore." I think he must have so understood it, for he replied:

"Bear up, sir—it is all right; we have reached our fishing-ground, and there's a capital tide. Bring her to, my son," this to Pierre junior (the vessel he meant, not me; I was beyond "bringing to" at the time, and nearer "bringing up"). "Look out for our marks—Pleinmont Cave and the white house in a line, one mile out. So, let go the anchor!"

I listened in a most uncomfortable kind of trance, my deliberate opinion being at the moment that all the fish in the sea were worth nothing in comparison to the blessedness of setting foot once more on dry land. I remember they scuffled about a good bit in getting the sails down, and I was vaguely conscious of the grating noise the anchor chain made in running out. Then we were left tossing on a heaving ground swell, up and down, lurch, down, roll, up, lurch. When we went down, the boat seemed to sink away from underneath, falling quicker than I did, and always in the opposite direction to that for which I was prepared, dodging all my efforts to accommodate myself to its motion. Our craft had "heaved to and reached." So had I, and forthwith commenced throwing myself overboard by instalments. Oh! my brothers and sisters who know what it is to be sea-sick, paradox it may seem to others, not so to you, you are all very well so long as you can be ill; it is when you *can't* you are truly and deplorably bad. The study of anatomy teaches that the human heart and the human liver are intimately connected with the human larynx by certain cords and membranes.

You may learn the same truth from sea-sickness in half the time, and in a more convincing manner, realising experimentally and beyond doubt that your heart and your liver *have* strings to them and get pulled into your throat, and go up and down like the boat, only always going down when the boat goes up, and coming up when it goes down. Then you begin to feel the truth of the proverb, "Hope comes to all except the lost and the sea-sick."

I was roused from a painful lethargy by the sound of something whizzing and spinning in the boat. It was a snipe-billed gore-fish, dancing and pirouetting, and entangling the fisherman's line—the first fish. To my sickly notion, it looked ill and giddy, as I was—it did me good to see any living thing in the same plight—and when Pierre senior put three lines into my hands, my fingers certainly closed on them, though in a helpless kind of way. I noticed, even then, they were horsehair lines, nearly a quarter of an inch in diameter, beautifully plaited like a hair watch-guard, loaded at every yard, and baited with sand-launce. I believe Pierre explained they were weighted with lead sinkers of from six to eighteen pounds apiece, to counteract the strength of the tide, and to remain at different depths, the lightest almost floating. When he brought me a stout cord in addition, the thickness of flag halliards, having a large meat-hook at the end baited with slices of mackerel, and balanced with thirty pounds of lead for bottom fishing, and whispered in my ear the magic word "conger!" I certainly felt better; the prospect of the excitement of getting a good conger "on" almost giving me an appetite on the spot.

The first good tug at my horsehair lines acted on me like a strong tonic, and I was surprised how soon I forgot all the ailments of the sea in the busy employment of hauling home dancing gore-fish, and mackerel weighing three or four pounds, and whiting pollack of eight and ten, as fast as ever I could get them into the boat, bait my hooks with fresh eels, and get the lines out again. We were all three fishing, and in the course of an hour I should judge we had upwards of forty fine fish of different sorts, which is rather more rapid sport than the freshwater fisherman experiences, whilst most of the fish fight quite as gamely as trout. The excitement, by this time, made me disregard all the pitching of the boat or the drenchings from occasional waves. Then came a tug at the conger line, like a strong ringer pulling a bell. Dropping all the others, I held on with both hands.

"Give him line, sir," said Pierre; "let him run, but mind he has no slack; steady!" he cried, as he saw the cord run through my fingers so fast that it made them burn and tingle again. "Steady! he's too good a fish to lose," and he came to my assistance. Whenever our fish slackened the cord by doubling, we hauled on him, keeping a gentle hand on his mouth, but giving him his head when he was inclined to bolt, and managing him like a restive horse. He cer-

tainly pulled like one. It was as much as ever my entire strength could hold him. I asked old Pierre what he judged the weight of the fish to be? "Near upon seventy pounds, sir," he replied; "but it is quite time he was in the boat, and we knew for certain."

We tired master conger a bit by letting him run and half drown himself; then gradually shortening his line till we got sight of him—great, black, writhing serpent that he was, lashing up the foam with his tail, and barking at us fiercely when his head came out of water. Pierre soon struck him with our gaff-hook, and we pulled his twining carcass into the boat. He measured over seven feet long, and the old man's estimate of his weight was not exaggerated. Our conger was a very savage fish—he gnashed his teeth at us even when held down with the gaff-hook, and young Pierre, for my instruction, presented him with a piece of wood to bite, on which he pretty soon left the marks of his teeth. It is said congers will bite fingers with even greater relish—of which fact I have little doubt. We despatched our prize by first stunning him, and then cutting the back of his neck so as to divide his spine.

As the tide began to "make," we got up anchor and ran back before the wind—pretty smooth sailing in comparison to what we experienced before—whilst I resumed my place at the helm, old Pierre making me steer in through masses of sunken rocks that gleamed up past us every minute in a way that made me highly nervous, in spite of his quick eye, lest a wrong turn of the tiller should bring us upon them. However, the old man consoled me with the assurance that after all six inches was very good clearance from a rock, and reminded me I had been a long time without a pipe. This was quite true, in spite of my boast, and I was not a little glad of the triumphant excuse that my tobacco was wet, my lights spoiled, and my pipe gone. The old fellow was determined to accommodate me though, for he drew out from his locker some fine honey-dew and a dry box of lucifers, loaded a clean "cutty," and tendered a light. I was better, very much better, but really doubted if I could face a pipe just now without a relapse. Still, as it wouldn't do to be beat, I managed just to keep it alight, but hereby testify never before or since to have smoked a pipe in such dreadful discomfort.

When we got ashore, I felt for all the world like a preserved New York lobster, for my oil-skin wrappings not only kept a great deal of salt water outside, but held a great deal of salt water inside, which had washed down my neck and remained bottled up in the waterproofing. In fact, when I came to be opened and tapped, it was surprising to see how much sea-water was concealed about my person.

Our conger duly appeared next day in the Guernsey fish-market. Old Pierre had particularly wished me to try some of him for soup, assuring me I should not know it from turtle—it is indeed stated to be really very good—but Guernsey market provided something I preferred

to conger, that is to say, a hind-quarter of native lamb, weighing only three pounds seven ounces; the whole *side*, indeed, weighed but seven and a quarter pounds. The flavour of Guernsey lamb would have been delicious to a more delicate appetite than my day's fishing had provided for me.

COMMON RIGHTS AND COMMON SENSE.

WHEN noble landowners fall out, common people may hope to hold their own—an axiom of limited application, and referring mainly to common lands. Where I have been lately staying down in Hertfordshire, the two great people of the county have had a fierce dispute about common land; and the example set some time since by Mr. Augustus Smith has been followed by a noble earl. There are no prettier lanes in England than may be found round Hatfield. A rich border of grass, from which natural avenues spring up and blend their foliage into a leafy archway; glimpses on all sides of bright meadows, fine trees, and richly cultivated ground, make them the very places to drive or ramble through on a summer's holiday. The land unused upon each side these lanes, and upon which the neighbourhood has strolled, and played, and wandered ever since there was a neighbourhood at all, was quietly enclosed the other day by the noble marquis, who is the earl's political and territorial rival in the county. Worse than this, some of it formed the frontage ground to the earl's fields, and was subsequently let off, at a small rent a year, to the earl's own tenant. Nay, as if to carry defiance to extremity, this grass lane, which divides lands belonging to the earl and his relative, the viscountess, was also calmly appropriated by the marquis, a gate fixed at each end, and the lane itself let to another of the earl's tenants. The only conceivable plea for these strange proceedings was that the marquis, as lord of the manor, was asserting what he believed to be his rights. Rumour says that, a formal correspondence and remonstrance being found unavailing, the young earl summoned his retainers together, and, reviving old feudal times, led them against his rival's outworks. It is certain that fences, palings, quickset hedges, bolts, bars, and gates, suddenly disappeared one fine night, and that the earl and his followers were seen in the vicinity immediately before and after the event. Imagine the delight of people who had seen piece after piece of common land enclosed by the proud old noble in the venerable brick mansion yonder, and who had never dared to say him nay! It was not the value of the land thus filched away and restored, but the having found an aristocratic and powerful champion, that delighted them. It is said that legal proceedings will follow, that the marquis is obdurate and the earl determined. All the better for the general question; and no better earnest of having the vexed ques-

tion of the rights of lords of manors settled could be hoped for than that a nobleman of high position should be stung into doing battle in the people's cause.

I only wish we had some one equally daring at Wimbledon; things have gone ill with our common ever since it was proposed to dedicate it to the public. They tell us that its present abuse and disfigurement is for our and its ultimate good; that the lord of the manor takes a parental interest in us and in the public; and that we shall in the end be hugely benefited by what is annoying us so desperately now. Piety defines afflictions as blessings in disguise, and on this principle we are expected to welcome what seem to be aggression and outrage, with a blind faith in the wisdom and benevolence of the lord from whose hands they are said to come. It is because some of our more rebellious spirits are murmuring loudly, and for the reason that our beautiful common is rapidly deteriorating, that I wish to state briefly what our common was a few years ago, what improvements were proposed and rejected, and how thoroughly anomalous is its present condition.

The shepherd in *As You Like It* was not more astonished at learning his "parlous state" from Touchstone, than we were at hearing of the terrible condition of our breezy open space, when it was proposed to enclose it "for the benefit of the public." Numerous tramps, gipsies, annoyances, nuisances, and abuses, defective drainage, and bad pasturage, were all said to be prevalent; and the panacea to protect residents from outrage, and to secure to the public their rights, was said to be the creation of a "lord-protector," the conversion of one portion of the common into a park with lodges, railings, gates, and keepers, over which this protector should have absolute sway, and other portions into building lots. Never were the benevolent impulses of a nobleman more cruelly perverted than by the framers of the measure embodying the foregoing provisions. It is an old story now, and the bill was first modified, and altered until its character was entirely changed, and then withdrawn; but as most of the nuisances it proposed to abrogate have increased since, it will be useful to recal the professed kindness of the lord of the manor, and the questionable way in which his advisers attempted to carry that kindness into effect. There is no doubt that our common would be better for draining. After a few wet days certain parts of it become swampy; but it was concluded, strangely enough, that building villas on the prettiest portion of it, and making of the rest a neat enclosure, something between Kensington-gardens and a mammoth pound, would be an agreeable remedy for this swampiness, and would suit conflicting tastes to a nicety. The perversity of those who thought a wild common, within twenty minutes' ride of Waterloo-bridge, to be a greater boon to smokedried London than any park, however trimly disciplined, is now meeting with condign pu-

nishment. A ramble over Wimbledon common, since the volunteer encampment has been removed, has just shown me that it has been shorn of its chief beauties, and that its decadence has been both rapid and disastrous.

The dangers it has escaped and the transitions it has experienced may be easily classified. Its condition before we were made aware of its abuses and defects; the proposals of the lord of the manor when mooting his scheme for its regeneration; the same proposal as modified and altered in deference to the wishes of the inhabitants of the district and the press; the nuisances and eyesores being fostered on it now; are all distinct stages in its history. What has happened at Wimbledon may happen to every common near a large town; and as, in spite of fine promises and high-sounding professions, the beautiful walks and rides we were so proud of are being gradually destroyed, and our most picturesque views rendered hideous, it will be perhaps useful to trace how these calamities have been brought about, and the nature of the warnings by which they were heralded.

After we had rallied from our first burst of astonishment at learning the horrible state of things said to be existing at our doors; after vigorously rubbing our eyes in a futile endeavour to discern the hordes of tramps and gipsies described as lawlessly squatting upon and injuring the space to be enclosed; after looking in vain for the other nuisances and annoyances so forcibly dwelt upon, we proceeded to examine the details of the scheme which was to preserve us from evils we had never felt, and to formally confer upon the public a few of the rights it had exercised without question from time immemorial. These details were soon declared to have an ugly look. The phrase "appropriation" occurred with unpleasant frequency. The public was to be "protected," and coddled, and watched, and guarded. The common which had been free as the sea-shore was to be enclosed by such fences as the lord of the manor in his capacity of "protector" of the proposed park thought fit. This protector was to be invested, moreover, with supreme power, and might create as many rides and drives, entrances and lodges, and appoint as many gate and park keepers as he thought proper. He was to put up seats, level obstructions, fill up hollows, plant trees and shrubs, and form lakes, ponds, and other ornamental works, when and where it pleased him. The park was to be open to the public at sunrise and closed at sunset on every day in the year, but admission money might be exacted whenever the sanction of the Home Secretary could be obtained. Political meetings, open-air preaching, and gatherings of working men's clubs or benefit societies, were all strictly prohibited; while the dismissal as well as appointment, together with the duties and services of park-keepers and servants, rested solely with the protector. Further, this exalted personage was to declare which of the rides and drives through the park were to be used for

cabs and public conveyances, which for exercise on horseback, where music might be played, where refreshments might be sold; and when any or all of the bye-laws and regulations should be altered or repealed. All persons found in the park after sunset were to be removed; all damage inflicted must be accounted for to the protector, who had the same legal powers given him as are enjoyed by railway companies under the Railway Clauses Consolidation act of 1845; the park-keepers were to be special constables, and might lawfully take into custody and deal with any person committing any offence in breach of any bye-law of the protector of the park; and the protector might let or sell for his own benefit all produce of the soil, and take rent from persons selling refreshments, and from those to whom he gave permission to erect buildings for entertainments or amusements. Some pieces of land within the common, on which stand a mill and outbuildings, familiar to every volunteer who has attended the annual meeting of the National Rifle Association, were to be augmented by two acres from the common, and the whole given up for the private house and gardens of the protector. In the words of the act—"For the erection at his own cost of a messuage or dwelling-house, and the formation of grounds for his own benefit and as his own absolute property;" and some of the most picturesque and beautiful portions of the common were to be sold outright, the sums paid for them to be invested in the funds in the name of the protector. The cost of enclosure, and of converting our common into a smart park, was to be defrayed out of these at the protector's discretion, and the common rights of lord and copyholders were to be paid for out of the same source. Such were the leading features of the scheme. The highly coloured nuisances, and the imaginary tramps and gipsies, were explained when we had the projected improvements shadowed forth.

The blacker the condition of the common now, and the more flagrant its evils, the more vital the necessity for reform. Picture an unwholesome swamp, infested by thieves and ruffians, and what so necessary as alteration and protection? Prove that the public were unable to partake of their legitimate enjoyment, and what so kind and benevolent as providing them with leading-strings in the shape of gravel-walks and bye-laws, of park-keepers, gates, and regular hours? But we at Wimbledon denied the alleged ills, and indignantly rejected the proposed remedies. Our daily observation, and our frequent strolls and rambles, made us eminently qualified to say whether tramps, gipsies, or nuisances were numerous or the reverse, and this part of the question met with a derisive and universal negative. Superficial observers would never have given us credit for the public spirit we displayed. For, however energetic and zealous the members of our little community may be when prosecuting their professions and businesses in town, there is not much to weld them together and to make them act in concert, in the life here.

A hasty breakfast, and a walk, drive, or ride to the train, a long fatiguing day in London, and a walk or ride from the station to our homes, a late dinner, and a short evening, make up the work-a-day lives of most of us. We have heavy dinner-parties, at which the village greengrocer supplements the domestic service of each establishment, and waits upon his employer of yesterday, with a polite assumption of never having seen him before. We have penny readings, too, where we declaim poetry, and recite humorous prose from a gusty platform, nominally for the edification of our brother the working man in the hall below, really to our sisters the fashionable ladies in the gallery above. These are almost the only occasions we see each other, except in the train and in church; and our suburban life was pre-eminently placid, decorous, and quiet, for a far longer period than falls to the lot of many villages so near London, after the railway whistle has once invaded them. But the bare thought of losing our common, of being marshalled like school-children where we could now wander at will, of seeing flower-beds and ornaments where it was our glory to know game was not unfrequently shot; of being outraged by twopenny peepshows, refreshment-stalls, circuses, swings, and peripatetic theatres being invited to hold saturnalia at so much a head, stung us to the quick. The whole district was in a ferment, and the very railway platform became a forum for discussion.

The short daily journey to and from London was one uninterrupted debate, and "To be continued in our next," applied to conversation at all times and in every place. Public meetings were called, and private conclaves commencing with soup and fish, and ending with olives and choice claret, were inaugurated. Our numerous resident lawyers supplemented with personal interest their professional skill; the proposed "protectorate" was voted an aggressive nuisance, the proposition to sell for building purposes the glades and dells now full of wild luxuriance and picturesque beauty, was vigorously, almost fiercely denounced; and eventually, such alterations were promised in the measure then before the House, as would have made it a benefit instead of an undoubted injury. The bill, as proposed to be amended, would have provided for the maintenance of the common in its present wild state, and would have placed in the hands of trustees the task of suppressing the trivial nuisances to be found on it. The Inclosure Commissioners, and the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, would each have had the appointing of a trustee, and the lord of the manor, instead of being an irresponsible dictator, would have been merely the third trustee. The clauses providing for high fences, lodges, and gates; for creating formal rides, drives, and walks, were erased, and the word "trustees" substituted for "protector" throughout. It was only after many conferences, proposals, and compromises that we succeeded in obtaining the promise that these im-

portant alterations should be made. It would be idle to enter into the arguments used, or to boast of the determined front displayed. Resolute on maintaining our rights, and on keeping the common open for the public, we should, but for the concessions made, have fought the bill stage by stage, and our advisers were confident of success. Just as we were congratulating ourselves upon having secured justice; just when the morning assemblages at the little railway station became most jubilant; just when we were all counting upon the security the amended measure would give us, we learnt that the lord of the manor had withdrawn his proposals altogether. The dubious rights of lords and commoners were to be left in abeyance, but meanwhile our common was to be untouched. We were puzzled at our own success. Some cynical spirits averred that we were premature in our jubulations, and that the apparent yielding would be found to have only heralded aggression in another form. By handing over the vague and undefined rights pertaining to a lord of the manor to independent trustees, and by accepting such portions of the original bill as provided for the preservation and maintenance of the common, we should, it was argued, have made other attempts at enclosure and encroachment impossible, and have prevented much heart-burning for the future.

We had now no guarantee that the public good would not again be made the plea for cutting up and selling portions of our land, or that the lord of the manor would not show his displeasure at being thwarted in various unpleasant ways. Still, we were victorious, and, despite a few forebodings, exulted on having preserved our common from the threatened invasion and confiscation. We appointed a local committee to watch our interests; some of us joined the COMMONS PRESERVATION SOCIETY, which aims at keeping open all commons within fifteen miles of London; and are all firm in our resolution to uphold our just rights by law. Unhappily, there is great difficulty in ascertaining precisely what these rights are. The whole tenor of legislation from the time of Henry the Third downwards has been in favour of enclosing waste lands. Our forefathers never contemplated these feverish over-crowded times, when a tract of uncultivated land is infinitely more precious to the community than any number of tilled acres in the same locality; and our best lawyers differ as to the exact rights of lords of manors, and the other holders or occupiers of land. The result is eminently unsatisfactory, as the most cursory inspection of our common will show.

Manure-heaps, rubbish, stones, dead animals, and garbage, are crammed together at the corner leading from the village to the rifle-butts, making that part of it an eyesore and a nuisance; turf has been peeled off it almost by the acre; the gorse and heather, of which we were so proud, is being rapidly sacrificed; huge yawning chasms are dug across its principal road, and in the centre of a picturesque dell, which was,

until a few months ago, one of its chief beauties, is a huge brick-field several acres in extent—in short, the common is being rapidly reduced to the condition attributed to it by the detractors advocating its enclosure, and, unless steps be speedily taken for its protection, London will soon lose a magnificent natural park which no expenditure of public money could replace. In the midst of the piles of rubbish and the manure-heaps are boards, saying that it is only by permission of the lord of the manor that anything is deposited there; the workmen engaged in making the road impassable tell you they are improving it and “makin’ it more leveller;” those engaged in the brick-field say that the clay they dig is destined for drain-pipes and bricks to free the common from damp, and to build the lord of the manor a house. Thus, every injury is plausibly spoken of as a public benefit, and matters have been so ingeniously arranged that the daring people who thwarted the lord of the manor’s scheme are punished by having their beloved common rendered a dreary waste, while any attempt to restrain the encroachers, or to resent the injuries being inflicted daily, can be met by uplifted hands and loud protestations against the unreasonableness of men who would not have roads improved, or a common drained. It is difficult to plausibly account for the rubbish, so the malignant increase of this is attributed to the want of power of the lord of the manor; and, in spite of our expenditure of time and money, Wimbledon seems doomed to see her healthy open space slip away from her, and to be reduced to the alternative of accepting a park because she is threatened with a desert. This is stoutly insisted on by many as the real policy adopted, and the ugly excrescences, the gravel-pits, the blocked-up road, and the havoc made by the brick-field, are all said to be portions of a deliberate plan. The motives prompting these cruel disfigurements are of course only known to those responsible for them, but their disastrous effect may be tested by any one who will take a twenty minutes’ ride from Waterloo station. It is quite unnecessary to play the partisan, or to decide between the respective rights of Wimbledon, of the general public, and of the lord of the manor. Common sense tells us that the existing state of things is terribly unsatisfactory, and that as the dwellers near are willing to drain the common, and to pay for its proper protection, they should be allowed to do so peaceably. It is monstrous that what one man chooses to call a public benefit, or what a dozen other men declare to be desirable for the nation’s good, should be allowed to affect

lands over which every dweller in the metropolis has a moral if not a legal right. Some of my friends would have the crown buy up the rights of lords of manors, and so obtain indisputable possession of common lands. This, they argue, is the only sure way of preserving our open spaces for the public, and of effectually stopping threatened encroachments. But independently of the enormous expenditure of the national funds this course would involve, and of the tacit, and, as I think, immoral recognition of the lords’ right to enclose which it would imply, our proceedings at Wimbledon, and even the present state of our common, bad as it is, seem to prove such extreme measures to be unnecessary. The bitter annoyances and injuries we complain of, are all said to be inflicted for the ultimate good of the community. The same plea was put forth for enclosure and building; and we should be perfectly satisfied to abide by the issue raised, and to take the decision of any disinterested persons on its validity. The great difficulty is, not what is the limitation of common rights, but how far those rights may be extinguished through the supineness, timidity, or poverty of those possessing them. We want to be relieved of the responsibility of fighting an expensive public battle with a powerful opponent, and of being legally annoyed and punished for presuming to be victorious. We believe that existing rights are sufficiently strong to keep our common open to the public, and to preserve its natural beauty intact, if those rights be read by the light of common sense. We want—and “we” applies to every one interested in the preservation of the commons near London—a powerful champion such as has been found in Hertfordshire, to enforce our rights and stem the encroachments of bricks and mortar. Here is a splendid opportunity for any young peer wishing to prove that his order is as useful as, and not less chivalrous than, of old. A little determination, a little public spirit, a little independence of those subtle social influences which hedge in a lord, and the thing is done. Neither great labours nor vast attainments are required, if such a man will only be our champion, for it needs no conjuror to say whether the destruction, disfigurement, and devastation, now successfully carried on at Wimbledon be an honest way of promoting what “the protector’s” original measure termed “the enjoyment and recreation of the inhabitants of the parish and of the public at large.”

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